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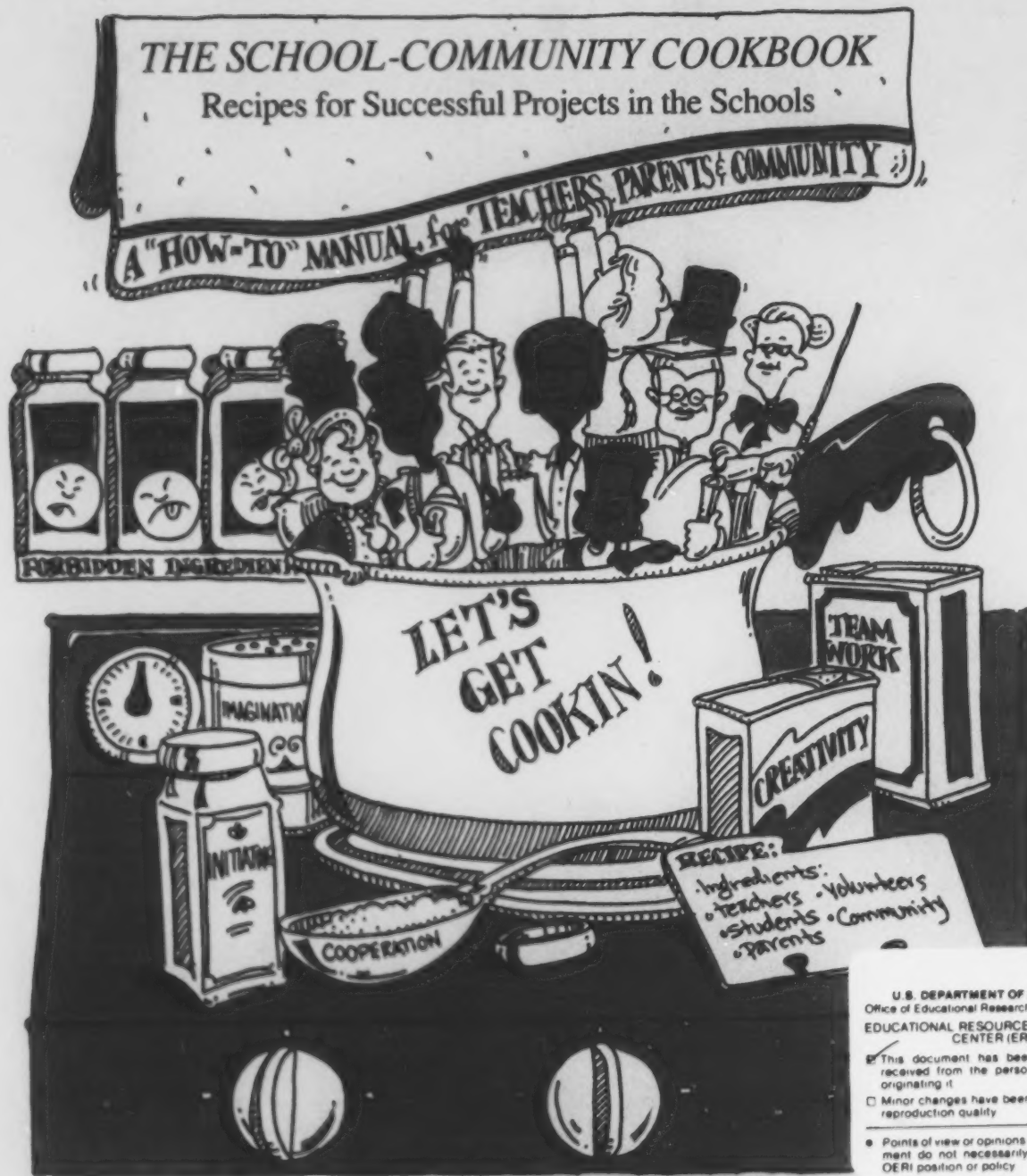
ABSTRACT

Guidelines and ideas for creating successful school/community projects are provided in this handbook. Organized like a cookbook, the book contains 43 chapters by individual contributors who take a community-based approach to education, in which the schools are the pivotal institutions of a community. The first section outlines the roles, or "main ingredients," of various participants, who include students, administrators, business, higher education, the school board, staff, teachers, parents, volunteers, the clergy, and the media. Section 2 presents "recipes," or step-by-step instructions for the following kinds of projects: community service; fundraising, partnerships, grants, and alumni involvement; student/family/community involvement; legislative affairs; public relations; and student achievement. The third section discusses other issues, or "food for thought." Issues include project evaluation, advocacy, budgeting, and designing a school mission. The appendix lists community resources in: (1) Baltimore (Maryland); and (2) Maryland Maryland. (LMI)

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"*The School-Community Cookbook* is a must for all citizens who care about the success of our schools and want to make a meaningful contribution of their time and talents. Both the first-time volunteer and the seasoned school partner will find this book to be a valuable resource."

Nancy Grasmick
Maryland State Superintendent of Schools

"As a community, we must all do our part to ensure that youngsters achieve their full potential as educated citizens and future leaders. Whether you are a teacher, parent, grandparent, community volunteer, member of a house of worship, businessperson, or interested citizen, *The School-Community Cookbook* contains practical and easy-to-use "recipes" that will get you involved in a school activity that's right for you."

Walter G. Amprey
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Baltimore City Public Schools

"The ideas and illustrations contained in this book are very compatible with our efforts in the Baltimore County Public Schools to involve as many people as possible in the process of public education. As the age profile in our society continues to show a greater generation gap, we must find means to involve more people who do not have a direct public school connection. *The School-Community Cookbook* contains many practical ideas for making this involvement effective and meaningful."

Robert Y. Dubel
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Baltimore County Public Schools

"The reasons for the business community's continuing interest in improving our schools are selfish ones -- our very survival depends on having smart workers and smart consumers. We can achieve that goal only by having all elements of the community working together. *The School-Community Cookbook* shows in very practical ways how to blend the right ingredients in the right amounts to make truly memorable partnerships."

Robert Keller
President
Greater Baltimore Committee

The School-Community Cookbook

THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY COOKBOOK

*Recipes for Successful Projects
in the Schools*

Edited by Carl S. Hyman

Illustrated by Scott Mattern

Forewords by

William Donald Schaefer

Governor, State of Maryland

and

Kurt L. Schmoke

Mayor, City of Baltimore

**The School-Community Cookbook is a project of the Children of Harvey and Lyn Meyerhoff
Philanthropic Fund of the ASSOCIATED: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, in cooperation
with the Fund for Educational Excellence.**

*To Meg and Alex,
and to Dave,
I finished this for you, Popi.*

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REGISTRATION CARD

Registration Number _____

IMPORTANT!

Your responses to the following questions will help us to provide you with useful updates and other valuable services. Please complete the information below, fold the form in half, and mail. The card is pre-addressed. THANK YOU!

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

NAME..... _____

TITLE/AFFILIATION.... _____

ADDRESS..... _____

_____ Zip _____

PHONE..... (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (FAX) _____

What is your primary role on the school-community scene? (Check one category)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| ☐ School Administrator | ☐ Teacher | ☐ Other School Employee |
| ☐ Community Organizer | ☐ Businessperson | ☐ Parent |
| ☐ Public/Private Agency Rep. | ☐ Other (please specify) _____ | |

What is the name of the school and school district in which you work or volunteer?

SCHOOL NAME(S): _____

SCHOOL DISTRICT(S): _____

Which of the following topics or issues do you consider to be most useful to your school and/or community? Select up to three (3) responses. Place a "1" in the box of your highest priority, followed by a "2" and "3" for your next highest priorities. (Please read the entire list first. Select a maximum of 3 responses)

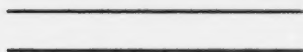
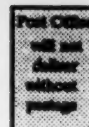
- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| ☐ Parent Involvement | ☐ Community Involvement | ☐ Public Relations | ☐ Community Service |
| ☐ Volunteering | ☐ Fund Raising | ☐ Grant Writing | ☐ Student Recruitment |
| ☐ Alumni Relations | ☐ Mentoring | ☐ Race Relations | ☐ Business Partnerships |
| ☐ Parent Literacy | ☐ Legislative Action | ☐ School Pride | ☐ Strategic Planning |
| ☐ Student Advocacy | ☐ Program Evaluation | ☐ Budgeting/Finance | ☐ University Relations |
| ☐ Other (please specify) _____ | | | |

For each priority that you selected above, please indicate the type of assistance that you think would be most beneficial to your school/community group. (Please check one box in each column)

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PRIORITY #1	PRIORITY #2	PRIORITY #3
Workshops and seminars	☐	☐	☐
Help with setting up programs	☐	☐	☐
Literature and other information	☐	☐	☐
Consultation with experts	☐	☐	☐

Do you have a recipe that you would like to contribute to future editions of the *Cookbook*? Please indicate the topic below. You will be contacted!

TOPIC: _____



Carl S. Hyman
The School-Community Cookbook
% The Fund for Educational Excellence
605 North Eutaw Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Foreword

by Governor William Donald Schaefer

Last night the mercury hovered around 10 degrees. I was troubled by the number of people who would be sleeping in alleys and on steam grates. State and local resources had been stretched and stretched. Shelters were crowded. In Baltimore, the MTA buses were filled to capacity with folks looking for space in a shelter. Later in the evening, on the 11 o'clock news, I heard about extraordinary people who have collected blankets and warm clothing from their neighbors and distributed them to people on the streets. One couple went out and purchased new blankets to give away. And, one woman who used to be homeless opened her home to several people who are currently homeless.

Now what does this have to do with *The School-Community Cookbook*? It proves that one person can make a difference! Some people are alive this morning because they had an extra blanket for protection last night. Your involvement with a school may save a life -- in a different way. You could influence a restless teenager to go to school, graduate, and prepare for productive employment. You could inspire a middle school student to say "no" to drugs or alcohol and prevent a miserable lifelong cycle of substance abuse. You could convince a 16-year old unwed mother to return to school and improve the future for two young people.

There are many ways that you can share a part of yourself with schools and students. For a little more than a year, the members of my Cabinet and I have had a partnership with Laurel High School in Prince George's County. Cabinet members meet regularly with groups of students. Sometimes they talk about the State or what's happening in their agencies. Sometimes they talk about the world. But they also spend a lot of time listening to what students have to say. Everyone who goes to Laurel High School wants to go back. I go back every few months. And every visit to Laurel prompts more good ideas for partnerships with their surrounding community and all around the state. Once you get partnerships started, they grow. When people start getting together to work on a common interest, it is almost impossible to predict how many exciting, new ideas will come up.

My best advice is to get started **NOW**. Keep track of all those good ideas, but just tackle one or two of them in the beginning. When those are underway, pick another one or two. With all the ideas in *The School-Community Cookbook*, you will be busy.

Good luck!

William Donald Schaefer
Governor of Maryland
January 17, 1992

Foreword

by Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke

As Mayor of Baltimore for the past five years, I have become more convinced than ever that education is the path to urban revitalization in the 1990s. Strong public schools ensure a well educated work force, which in turn strengthens the city's economic base. And through education, we can provide young people with positive alternatives to early parenthood, substance abuse, and crime.

Yet I am also aware that many city schools are struggling to relate to a society and a student population that no longer exist. For many young people today, the traditional networks of support -- neighborhood schools, social and religious organizations, health care programs, and perhaps most importantly, the family -- are weakened, or have disappeared.

Recognizing that education must now involve more than conventional instruction, we have to radically rethink the way schools currently do business. In Baltimore, we have initiated a community-based approach to education, making schools the anchors in each neighborhood. This new strategy involves parents, community groups, churches, and local businesses; stresses decision-making at the school level; and with the help of city agencies, brings much needed health and other services to the schoolhouse setting.

Transforming our schools into the pivotal institutions of a community is a major challenge, and we need all the inspiration and practical advice we can get. I think *The School-Community Cookbook* serves in both capacities. It challenges all of us to get involved, and offers practical advice on a wide range of school and community projects. Learn how to become a mentor, organize a toddler fair, develop a school-business partnership, write a grant for a new playground, or start a community service program.

By encouraging parents, community groups, and businesses to share the responsibility for the well-being of our young people, *The School-Community Cookbook* is making an important contribution to the community-based approach to education. So I urge you to read it. Use it. And get involved. Join me in the challenge to convert our schools into institutions that address the real needs of today's students, as well as the community as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

There is no better way to start a cookbook than to say that we all must wake up and smell the coffee! Schools are changing in order to prepare our youngsters for life in the 21st century, and all of us will need to lend a helping hand.

By the time your child, grandchild, or young next door neighbor graduates from high school, he or she will probably need to use a computer, speak in a foreign language, and face many challenges and opportunities that we can't even comprehend today. Will the kids be ready? If you've ever read the newspapers or listened to the radio, you'd probably say *no!!*

So, what's the problem? That is not an easy question, and there are no easy answers. However, one thing is certain: as a parent, teacher, volunteer, business person, or community activist, you have a personal stake in school improvement.

There is no doubt about it -- research shows that if schools are to improve, the whole community -- parents, teachers, community groups, houses of worship, grandparents, and you -- must be actively involved in the process. Is this idea new? According to Dr. William H. Lemmel, former Superintendent of Public Instruction in Baltimore...

One of the greatest needs of public education...is to recapture, in a practical way, the close and intimate relationship between the school and the parents, between the school and the total community.

... If this relationship is to be

effective, it must not be superficial; the community must be part of the school and the school a part of the community.

He said that in 1948. So, where (and when!) do we start?

Well, today is your lucky day, because schools cannot survive by reading, writing, and arithmetic alone. They also need money, tutors, advocates, beautification projects, mentors, publicity, playgrounds, alumni support, colleges and universities, grants, and other community services. And they need *you* to help get them. **And that's what the School-Community Cookbook is all about!**



WHAT IS THE SCHOOL- COMMUNITY COOKBOOK

?

Simply put, the *School Community Cookbook* is a manual on how to conduct successful projects that will benefit schools even if you have no experience!

Can you cook? That is, after you learn about the ingredients, can you follow a recipe and prepare a meal? If so, the *School-Community Cookbook* is for you.

This manual is organized just like a regular old cookbook. First, we tell you some things that you need to know about the ingredients -- the *people* who will help

you get the job done. Teachers, parents, volunteers, administrators, and community activists are the types of ingredients you'll need to know about in order to *get cookin'* on a school project. We tell you who they are, what makes them tick, and how to get them to help you.

Next, we offer you a host of *recipes*, or actual step-by-step instructions on how to use these ingredients to raise funds, increase parent involvement, get and keep volunteers, enhance race and ethnic relations, conduct community service projects, and so forth.

Finally, we provide you with some other *foods for thought*, such as how to evaluate a project, and how to be a good advocate for both kids and schools. A list of where to go for extra help is also provided.

...schools cannot survive by reading, writing, and arithmetic alone. They also need money, tutors, advocates, beautification projects, mentors, publicity, playgrounds, alumni support, colleges and universities, grants, and other community services. And they need you to help get them.

Best of all, the *Cookbook* was written by some of the best "cooks" around. Each ingredient and recipe was contributed by an individual who has experience conducting the projects they describe, and who wanted to share their successes with you.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS BOOK?

The *Cookbook* has been written for those who wish to conduct projects to improve schools. Whether you are a retired citizen who hasn't been in a school for 50 years, an experienced classroom teacher, a community association member, a parent, the neighborhood shoe store owner, or the president of a bank, there is something in the *Cookbook* for you.

While some of the chapters are specifically geared to teachers, parents, and community activists, most, *if not all*, recipes can be adapted for use by **anyone** who is interested in getting involved. **YOU** are the cook.

The *Cookbook* is a manual and a reference book. And there are recipes for every appetite. Many chapters will be appealing to you, others will provide interesting food for thought, and others will be completely irrelevant to your situation. It is important to understand that this book is not a novel to be read from cover to cover. Rather, it is designed so you can easily pick and choose programs and issues that are interesting to you. The **Table of Contents** is your guide to selecting topics of interest.

The *Ingredients* section will help you understand how to work effectively with different groups of people who are the major "stakeholders" on the school-community scene. Like a dictionary, the ingredients *define* the attributes, characteristics, and special quirks of the people who will be important to have on board when conducting your special event or program. Consult this section often; it will help you to determine how your

recipe may turn out!

The *Recipe* section has been designed to provide you with step-by-step guideposts for successful planning and implementation of your project. Again, **YOU ARE THE COOK**. Just as you may be inclined to add a little more salt and pepper to your special dish, you may be similarly inclined to be more liberal in your use of certain school ingredients (i.e., more teachers, more parents, etc.) in YOUR project. Go for it!

Other Foods for Thought is a very important section that should be read by all. Topics such as how to conduct a project evaluation and how to advocate for children are related to everything you do

in the school. That's why they're called foods for thought.

The *School-Community Cookbook* can't possibly tell you everything you'll need to know about every topic. That's why we've included a *Resources* section. Many excellent books and periodicals exist that will help you expand your knowledge on a particular topic. Many agencies in your community are eager to help you. Use them.

Finally, don't forget the REGISTRATION CARD!! By completing and mailing this self-addressed post card, you will be able to receive new recipes, and join in a network of other important school "chefs." Please mail it in today.



SECTION A
The Main Ingredients:

***People on the School-Community Scene... Their Roles,
Responsibilities, and Influences***

STUDENTS

The Primary Client

*Joe Olivieri and the Students of A.S.C.B.C.**

All that you are about to read in this and following chapters is written to help you help students. Ideally, after you finish reading the chapter and the book, you will understand that students must be more than your primary client. Students also have to be your main ingredient. That means including them in the planning process. It's all too easy to assume what we students want or need. I am sure that you have all attended meetings with an agenda to motivate or help students. *Did anyone ask the students what they needed or wanted?* To successfully work with students, you must understand your target group and experience them first hand.

You don't have to be told that students are ordinary people, since you, being a normal person, were at one time a student yourself. We have needs, pressures, motivations, likes and dislikes and feelings -- just like other people do. Just as you may be concerned with job advancement, students will be concerned with college and high school matriculation. Just as you hate spending hours in long boring meetings, students don't like to either. The equation is the same for everyone, while the variables may be different.

To define the variables, you can't just call in the student council president and ask his or her opinion. Believe me, it doesn't work. It's also not enough to have an

"open door" policy. Without an open mind and an approachable personality, you will never be able to work effectively with the students in your school and community.

When working with students, you will run into the same problems you do when working with adults. Most likely, you will never be working with a homogeneous group of students. If you are lucky, you will always work with a diverse group and be able to use that diversity to strengthen your projects and proposals.

Students, however liberal and progressive they may appear, are very conscious and concerned about racial and socio-economic differences. There will always be a minority in any group. You may not be able to walk into a room of white faces and see a minority, but one exists. The school environment encourages students of different races and backgrounds to be together. This occurs very rarely anywhere else in the community. It should go without saying that you shouldn't exclude any group from your plans. If you exclude a minority, you will cause resentment. Focusing too much on a minority will label you a racist or an elitist. As a minority in an urban school system, my favorite music was never played at school dances, but I was never made to feel left out. That is the happy medium you need to find. You cannot please all groups one hundred

* Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City

percent of the time, *but no one should ever be made to feel uncomfortable.*

As with adults, you will find very few students willing to work without recognition or hope of personal advancement. There are plenty of students who realize that volunteering benefits everyone, including themselves. The majority of students, however, may not be so understanding about the need to contribute their own time and effort. You will find it very difficult to motivate this type of student, and when you think about it, you shouldn't have to. The most effective way to mobilize students is to have them mobilize themselves. As in all groups, leaders emerge as respected members of the group. These leaders should be used as moderators between you and the group. Pass your ideas by them for feedback, and they in turn will relay their concerns to you.

The most effective way to mobilize students is to have them mobilize themselves.

The most important thing to remember about working with students or planning something with them is that it must be fun! Even the most mundane work can be made appealing to students, if it is fun. There must be appeal in everything you want students to do, whether it's in a classroom or in the community. This appeal does not necessarily require you to dress like Einstein to teach a science class (unless you really want to). Over-creativity may make you popular for a short time, but in the minds of most students, respect counts more than novelty over the long

run.

Over the years, as a student leader on the local and state level, I have witnessed many successful techniques used to motivate students. The following is a list of activities and ideas from my own experience that can help you plan for and with students.

☒ **ALLOW OWNERSHIP OF ALL IDEAS TO STAY WITH THE STUDENTS**

If an idea is *theirs*, the students will see that idea through to its realization. I have seen too many advisors and teachers who suggest and advise, but never allow the students to enjoy their own success or failure.

☒ **INCLUDE STUDENTS IN ALL LEVELS OF PLANNING**

When students are allowed not only to sit in, but also to *actively* participate in planning meetings, you will be overwhelmed by their enthusiasm. A program exists in our student government that places students on public and private boards and commissions. All parties benefit.

☒ **WE'RE STILL YOUTHFUL!**

Sometimes the most energizing activities for students are the fingerplays and songs of early youth. Students might claim maturity, but who can resist a round of little bunny fu-fu or the itsy-bitsy spider? I have seen high school auditoriums filled with singing bouncing seniors making fools of themselves and having a good time.

The bottom line is that students are always in a transitional phase of life physically, emotionally, spiritually, politically, socially, and academically.



**MAKE SURE THAT STUDENTS
KNOW THE BENEFITS OF ANY
ACTIVITY**

Adults can easily make us feel obligated to perform. If this is the case, enthusiasm will exist as far as you can throw your students. But if we are made aware of the benefits and the amount of effort needed to reap those benefits, you will develop a group of

loyal and dedicated students.

The key to a successful recipe for students is to understand that the only difference between you and us is our lack of experience in the adult world. The largest favor you can do is to give us the opportunity to experience and learn. I wish you luck!

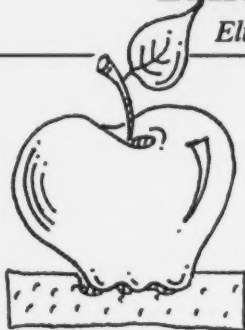
Joseph Olivieri is a 1991 graduate of the Baltimore City College High School and past president of the Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City.



TEACHERS

Elizabeth Allen

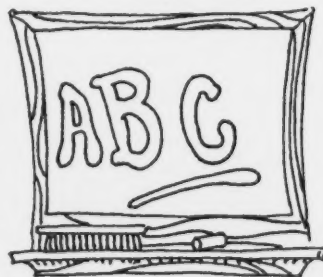
The Miller sisters lived in our neighborhood at the end of the block in a big old house. The two ladies had been music teachers for more than twenty years. They were the epitome of *proper behavior* -- very straight-laced, pleasantly polite, with excellent diction and elocution. They were always exemplary models of gentility for the neighborhood, modeling deportment, and the proper amount of haughtiness that distinguished one as being a *TEACHER*. Have times changed? Yes and no.



Who are teachers? What is it that makes them different from other people? Are they men and women who display all of the above-mentioned characteristics? I would venture to say that teachers of today certainly have many, if not all, of those characteristics, and many, many more.

In the 1990's, the teacher has assumed a more diverse role than her predecessors of even 15 years ago.

Unfortunately, he or she may not have had the training for all of the other roles, besides teacher, that he or she must play. These roles include *educator, counselor, social worker, psychiatrist, nurse, secretary, student, mentor, colleague, political activist,*



role model, behavior modifier, intellectual, mediator, parent, and friend. All inclusive, isn't it? And still, for many of us, it is necessary to have a substantial amount of energy reserved to devote to the role of being a parent to our *own* children.

Most people, including children, parents, and non-educators, have a very interesting perspective about the role of a teacher. On very good days, those perspectives are somewhat amusing and on other days they are sources of extreme agitation. Let's take a moment to examine some of these attitudes and opinions.

First of all, no matter what the subject -- whether it is about the quality of literature, current trends in the stock market, who holds the NCAA championship, or the most recent discovery in the field of aerodynamics -- a teacher is supposed to know the answer to whatever question is posed. If most teachers were given a nickel for every time they've been asked a question and then told *You don't know the answer to that and you're a teacher?*, then I submit that the never-ending request for higher salaries for teachers wouldn't even be an issue! We are expected to know *EVERYTHING* about *EVERYTHING*. I would surmise that the expression "Know It All" was coined to describe a teacher.

Secondly, it's a total surprise to many when we either enjoy or participate in the little, ordinary activities of everyday life. Once I was eating pizza with my children in a shopping mall when one of my

students happened to notice me. His eyes became as big as saucers and he exclaimed to his mother, "*Ma, look! There's my teacher eating pizza!*" The urge to say, *Yes, we like pizza too*, came to mind, but I just smiled, said something polite, and continued to eat. And let's not forget grocery shopping! Everyone knows that teachers don't do little mundane things like that! They don't have to because they don't eat.

What is amusing to us is that the children aren't the only ones who register surprise when the teacher is seen acting just like everyone else. Last summer my husband and I attended a dance. We danced, and as we walked back to our table, a parents of one of my former students came up to me and said: "*Mrs. Allen! I thought that was you, but I almost didn't recognize you. My God! You look beautiful. Fred, come here quick. Look, it's Mrs. Allen. Can you believe it?*" As they both looked at me in amazement, I thought to myself that yes, we too like to get dressed up and go out to dance. It seems to me that a teacher is a teacher -- not quite like everyone else, and just a little apart from the mainstream.

Because we are a group of professionals who are very visible and who are constantly under scrutiny, there are many attitudes, behaviors, opinions, and remarks that make our jobs very rewarding and that bring us satisfaction and joy when we reflect upon them. Conversely, there are some attitudes, behaviors, and remarks that make the word "cringe" come to mind.

Listed below are some of the DOs and DON'Ts -- how to endear and avoid

alienation from, "the different ones" -- the teachers. Most apply to parents, but these tips are also relevant to volunteers, community representatives, and other faculty members.

DO

* Smile and be pleasant. It's much better for us to remember you that way, especially when it's necessary for us to call you in the evening, after dinner, when we've bathed our little ones, sparred with our teenagers, and given our spouses the required amount of attention.

* Give a compliment, an accolade, and a word of encouragement when it is warranted.

* Make suggestions. We really do appreciate them, especially when they are relevant and applicable to the academic, social, and emotional growth and well-being of your child or the children in your community.

* Volunteer your services and your time. There is always a need for assistance, a new idea, and another adult with whom to consult.

* Be visible. Attend parent-teacher meetings, accompany the class on trips, wave and take a couple of minutes to chat with us when you see us on the playground.

* Be thoughtful. Send a card, write a brief note, bake a batch of cookies, send in a flower, or something that the teacher will be able to use with the entire class, e.g., counting objects for elementary

school math, books, magazines, pencils, etc.

My experiences with parents over the years have included all of the do's above and much more. I've been blessed to have had parents who have been supportive, interested, and very vocal. If I've left the best "DO" for last that would be to...

* Be VOCAL. Market the positive things you see occurring in the school. Discuss and indicate the events and activities that you don't like and about which you have questions. DEMAND quality education for your child and for your neighborhood from teachers, principals, superintendents, and the legislature. Don't settle for anything less than full quality.

AND THE DON'T'S:

* Don't come in unannounced and talk to the teacher at length or pop into the classroom for an informal chat without an appointment. The time before and after school is devoted to daily preparation, team meetings, faculty meetings, and many other school-related activities. Scheduling an appointment will give you the "quality time" that you so deserve and which is so necessary to the growth of your child.

* Don't put the teacher in the position of learning about a problem or a concern that you have from the principal, another teacher, other parents, or from your child. Be direct. Establish a rapport. Maintain open lines of communication.

* Don't bring the teacher your left-over negative feelings from your bad day at work, the traffic jam, or your economic

and personal problems. Teachers are expected to leave those feelings outside of the classroom and to conduct themselves professionally. We appreciate it when the same courtesy is extended to us.

* Don't de-professionalize the teacher. There is always the invitation for a healthy discourse or a difference of opinion when it pertains to grades, curricula, or almost anything that is pertinent to the well-being of the children. However, just as the physician is respected as a professional, the teacher must be respected as the professional that he or she is.

* Don't think of us as baby sitters. We aren't. We are shaping the minds, imparting knowledge, and exerting a considerable amount of influence over your children, who are considered to be the future of our society. We plan for them after school, in meetings, and at home. We're still awake when everyone else is asleep -- thinking, planning, marking papers, making charts, collecting items. We become students in seminars and in college classrooms and we network with each other and with other professionals. All for your children. *Baby sitters don't do that.*

* Don't ever be afraid to regard the teacher as your friend. He or she is there, ready to assume any of the roles that have been mentioned before, and committed to the education and well-being of your children.

Remember, we want your children to succeed, and we need your help. We need a partnership between the home, the school, and the community. We need your encouragement, your support, and your

commitment to quality.

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PARENTS

Lucretia Coates

A key ingredient in most of the recipes in this book is the PARENT. Let's take a close look at this very important ingredient. First, we must examine the roles and responsibilities of parents in relation to their roles and responsibilities to the school. At the forefront of these responsibilities are the parent's basic obligations:

- to establish a home environment that supports learning;
- to ensure their children's health and safety;
- to provide parenting and child-rearing skills needed to prepare children for school; and
- to supervise, discipline and guide children at each level.



In addition to providing the basic foundation for their youngsters, parents are encouraged to extend their roles and responsibilities by volunteering in the school, participating in school decision

making, and other areas of parent involvement. The parent's responsibilities are further extended as a result of conferences, report cards, and other communications received from their local school. Parents are expected to reinforce the child's learning at home.

It can be very difficult for many parents to assume some or any of the above roles without help and support from the school. Meet Ima. She is typical of an increasing number of parents in our urban public school systems. Ima is the single parent of three children. She was 17 when she had her first child, and did not complete high school. Her own school years were less than satisfactory, and she dropped out of high school in the tenth grade after failing in the eighth and tenth grades.

It's difficult for Ima to support her family with the income she receives from social services. Her youngest child is 18 months old. Because she does not have marketable skills, it has been impossible for her to find a job that would pay for day care.

Ima is doing the best she can to raise the kids, but lacks many of the parenting skills mentioned above. She would like to volunteer, but is worried it would be too difficult with a child at home. In addition, she doesn't feel comfortable talking to the principal and teachers. Her wardrobe consists mainly of the clothes that she wears around the house, and she feels uncomfortable about her appearance. Her son's teacher told Ima to provide extra

reading material at home and to reinforce his learning at home. Ima would like to follow the teacher's suggestions, but is rather "stressed out" with day-to-day survival. While not all parents possess all of Ima characteristics, many do.

Another large segment of the urban school population consists of two working parents. Meet Wendy and Wendell, a married couple with two students. The Workers are financially secure and have provided a home environment that is supportive and conducive to their youngster's success in school.

These parents are not available during the school day. Although they are very interested in their children's education, they feel overwhelmed with the day's activities and have some difficulty attending to the two children's school concerns. On occasions when Wendy and her husband visit the school, Wendy feels that the school is not receptive to and is threatened by her presence. Wendy and her husband are active members of several community organizations and committees. They have some ideas and suggestions that they think will assist their children's school operate more effectively.

Wendy and Wendell are characteristic of an ever increasing parent population. More and more parents are joining the work force. More and more parents are becoming informed about the issues and trends affecting education.

Regardless of educational, social, or economic backgrounds, all parents want the best for their youngsters. Now that you've met Ima, Wendy and Wendell, how do you work with them effectively to

promote the best possible outcome for their children?

INVOLVING PARENTS

Involving parents in the education of their children in appropriate and meaningful ways is your key to a successful school-parent and teacher-parent partnership. A comprehensive program of parent involvement, as defined by Dr. Joyce Epstein of The Johns Hopkins University, requires schools to involve parents at all grade levels and in a variety of roles. These programs should be designed to:

- * help parents develop parenting skills and foster conditions at home that support learning.** Workshops are popular, but are usually not well attended. Regular newsletters to parents or notes from the teacher can be effective. When workshops are provided, schools should provide a summary of these materials to all parents.

- * provide parents with knowledge of techniques designed to assist children at home.** Many teachers are now designing homework assignments that require the interaction and active participation of parents (see Project T.I.P.S. in this book).

- * promote clear two-way communication.** A partnership is not one-way. Provide many opportunities for parents to communicate to the school. "Half-and-half" letters, and other written correspondence designed to be interactive, are excellent ways of getting input from parents and of problem-solving issues in the classroom. Since all parents cannot make all meetings, this creativity is greatly appreciated.

* **involve parents in instructional and support roles at the school.** Parent Clubs are a great way of encouraging involvement (see Parent Club chapter). It is important to note that this type of commitment will require some training in order to be successful.

* **support parents as decision makers by helping them to develop their leadership in governance, advisory and advocacy roles.** Many parents of all social and economic circumstances have natural leadership abilities. Your challenge is to foster these talents. There are many excellent organizations that sponsor activities for parents including unions, national parent-teacher groups, and the school system's professional development and community relations departments. Consult them often and avail yourselves to these services.

Strengthening the link between school and home is vital to successful interaction with parents!

DO'S AND DON'TS

* **DO personalize your relationship with parents.** All parents like to know that their children are a priority. When you interact with parents, be sure to convey that message to them.

* **DO be receptive and attentive at all times.** School system and school-based personnel must be receptive to parents. No one wants to be treated like an annoyance. Answer their questions with honesty and integrity. Parents, as well as their children, are your *clients*.

* **DO survey and tap the talents and**

interests of parents. We too early assume that we know what parents think, what parents want, and when they want it.

* **DO provide appropriate training for parents who volunteer.** Some teachers are "born teachers." Volunteers are often not "born volunteers."

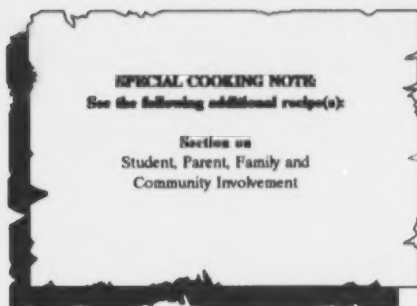
* **DO encourage parents to ask questions and offer suggestions.** Most parents do not want to control schools. They can, however, be a powerful source of support.

* **DO eliminate the "us" and "them" mentality. *WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO THE WORD "WE"?***

* **DON'T prejudge parents.** Be sensitive to the differences that exist in the educational and socio-economic levels of parents. Don't assume that because some parents are not college educated they have nothing of substance to contribute or that they have to be "spoon fed" information. Treat parents with the same level of respect that you expect of others.

* **DON'T "nickel and dime" parents.** Think "penny-wise" when asking for or planning activities that require parents to provide money. Many parents are on extremely tight budgets and have limited funds.

* **DON'T put parents off.** They *know* when they're getting the run around! If you don't have the answer, just say the magic three words: "I DON'T KNOW." But in the same breath, reassure them that you will try to find the answer.



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SCHOOL-BASED ADMINISTRATORS

Sheila Z. Kolman

There are more great recipes for using school-based administrators -- principals, and assistant principals -- than there are flavors of ice cream. As an ingredient in your well-cooked plans for school improvement, you will find their personal qualities and professional skills to be quite versatile and helpful. Like yeast, they will rise to the occasion. But you should know a few things about them to use them effectively.

THE END RESULTS

School-based administrators are middle managers who are responsible for *every* aspect of their school's operations. They are the instructional leaders for their schools (the "principal" teacher), the individuals responsible for implementation of the school system's curriculum, as well as ensuring that all children learn and all teachers teach.

In addition, they are the curriculum experts in the field, and the instructional team leaders who coordinate the professional development activities for their staff. They nurture teacher training and learning, execute new classroom strategies, and promote experimentation.

Principals and assistant principals are individuals who motivate and introduce staff collaboration regarding goals and activities for the school. They are the coordinators for outside support and central office staff who contribute their

expertise and innovations to the school's instructional programs. In other words, they are both the *lead teachers* and the *teachers' leaders*. School-based administrators are the resource managers for the schools. They are responsible for securing and scheduling personnel resources, the teaching and support staff that collaborate to provide educational services for children.

Building administrators expend considerable time and effort on the configuration and utilization of staff to make the school system's required programs and their individual visions realities. From teachers to librarians, from department heads and master teachers to pupil services personnel (social workers, speech-language pathologists, etc.) -- all of them must be managed in ways that produce results for the bottom line -- student growth and achievement.



Principals and their assistants are also the managers of the school building and all of the materials in it. In a sense, they are the coordinators of the plumbers, electricians, locksmiths, landscapers, and anyone else who makes the school operate. They must see and respond to all needs. Principals and assistants must ensure that the duplicator machines duplicate, that projectors project, that telephones ring, and on and on and on!

Through all of this, the school-based administrator is also a real person. This individual wears many different hats (during the same day) with a wide variety of people. He is the child's teacher, counselor, advocate, nurse, and parent-away-from-home. He is the superintendent's representative in the school, the individual responsible for explaining the curriculum, handling complaints, justifying and defending the rules and regulations, answering every question, and obtaining information.

And that's not all. He is the community's principal contact person, and, hopefully, good neighbor. He is the school business partner's chief contact person and program coordinator. All this explains the school-based administrator is also known as the *principal*!

IMPORTANT ATTRIBUTES

Training and Experience. The school-based administrator must be an individual who used to like -- and still likes -- school, and one who wants to spend his life in the school house. Administrators have masters degrees and advanced professional certificates, and a large number have doctorates. They have focused their

educational training and experience at the elementary, middle school, or high school level, and developed expertise along the way on specific grade levels or subjects and disciplines.

Every principal and assistant principal has been a successful classroom teacher as well as held formal or informal school leadership roles. They may have been counselors, master teachers, department heads, coaches, faculty committee representatives and chairpersons, building representatives or librarians.

Administrators have qualified for their positions by earning passing scores on the Educational Administration and Supervision portions of the National Teachers Examination. They have completed graduate level courses in administration and supervision, plus numerous workshops in accounting, labor relations, contract administration, and other management issues. In addition, many cities and states require principals and assistants to pass credential reviews, assessment centers, and other qualifying paths.

Personal and Professional Qualities and Other Skills for Success. The school-based administrator must like people and *love* children. He must believe in the power of the school house and want to spend his life's work in it. He must have boundless energy and enthusiasm, and have the will to produce results 5 to 7 days a week and 8 to 13 hours per day.

The most effective school administrators are visionaries who are not only committed to the belief that all children can learn but also able to assess and plan

strategies for making their dreams come true. They are totally committed to their schools and dedicated to the educational development and growth of their students. They also are honest evaluators who can assess needs, establish goals, measure performance, and effect adjustments as needed.

Administrators are often strong-willed and persistent, yet sometimes flexible and yielding. They are motivated to achieve; they value success-producing results.

Principals and assistant principals possess a full complement of leadership skills, including abilities related to the organization of people and programs as well as to problem analysis and decision-making. They will frequently adjust their leadership styles to meet the requirements of the situation. At times, the administrator is the leader who creates the plan and moves the staff forward into action. At other times, he is the facilitator who empowers staff, parents, and the community to design the strategy and implement the program.

In essence, there is not a single style of leadership that could characterize the school-based administrator at all times. They must be sensitive and thick skinned, humanistic and objective, serious and lighthearted, logical and crazy, aggressive and passive, and high-powered and low-keyed. Their basic personalities set the tone and climate of the school.

DO's and DON'TS

At this point, you must be convinced that the business of running a school house is not for those who are faint of heart or

mind. If you're not totally confused about the multiple roles and responsibilities of the principal and assistant principal, the following general tips will help you to work more effectively with your school's administrators:

DO

- * Remember that problems that arise at the school are most successfully resolved at the school. The principal is pivotal in addressing and resolving school issues. Be candid and cordial in discussing your concerns. Mutual respect is a must.

- * Get involved at school and stay involved. Effective schools are lead by administrators who welcome the collective wisdom and interaction of all stakeholders.

- * Be flexible. If the principal must schedule a meeting at a time other than your first choice, it is usually because other facets of school life are taking precedence at that moment.

- * Ask the principal to suggest appropriate strategies, and resources to address your needs and concerns. Principals are in an excellent position to locate resources quickly.

DON'T

- * Don't expect the principal to always agree with your position on school issues. As the educational leader of the school, the principal's view will most likely be responsive to the overall mission, philosophy, and goals of the school, as well as to the various constituencies that must be considered.

* Don't expect the building administrator to be a carbon copy of your favorite principal. Each has his or her own leadership style, personality, and set of experiences.

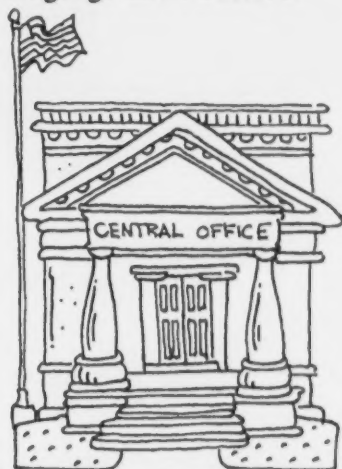
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WORKING WITH YOUR SCHOOL'S CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Nancy E. Gimbel

The members of the central administration of your school system can be your most valuable resource when planning a school program or seeking information. This chapter is designed to walk you through some of the more important things you may want to know about "headquarters."

The language and structure of education at headquarters might not be the same as what you might be familiar with in your school. Is this bad? No! It's just part of the way organizations function. Every large organization, whether in private industry, government, or in the nonprofit sector, has its own language and structure.



It is most important to understand that the roles and functions of the "bureaucrats" in the central office are *not* the same as those in the schools. However, every member of the organization, from the Superintendent to the teacher to the custodial aide to the librarian, has a

mission to serve the clients -- the parents, students, and all recipients of educational services in your district.

WHO'S WHO?

The organization, which might vary somewhat in every school district, basically flows from the top downward to the schools. At the top is usually the school board which makes all of the policy decisions for the district. The board also controls the school system budget which is usually provided by the city or county government. Regardless of whether your board is elected or appointed, its goal is to provide the best educational resources available for the students of the district.

The top administrator in the school system is the superintendent, who usually answers to the board. As in any corporation, the superintendent is concerned with executing the daily operations of the entire system as well as representing a good, solid image of the school system to the overall community. Not unlike his/her peers in the business world, the superintendent, who is usually an educator, has worked his/her way up the education ladder from the classroom to the top office. Along the way, through masters level and doctoral course work, the superintendent has usually been trained in business *and* in the business of education.

Reporting to the superintendent are all of

the offices, departments, or bureaus which make up the central administration. This is where most school system organizations differ. However, regardless of the layers of management, the work done in these offices is similar in every school system. These functions are discussed later in this chapter. The main difference is the titles given to managers, and the reporting structure.

To determine your school system's organization, contact the superintendent's office and request a copy of the organizational chart. With this in hand, you can work more easily within the system to help your school. Your principal's office should have a copy of the system's organizational chart or a directory and will be able to help you understand the functions of the various offices and departments within it. You might even consider holding a parents meeting with the school administration to discuss the district's organization and how you as parents, teachers, principals, or concerned community leaders can work with the central administration to improve your school.

SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE

Understanding the design of the system might be easier to understand than the language used within educational circles. Don't get hung up on terms which might have different meanings than you are usually familiar with. Rather, speak in terms you understand and work out differences. For example, restructuring, decentralization and school-based management all mean that the school is responsible for its own direction, but still accountable to the superintendent and the

board. The term used may differ from school system to school system.

The easiest way to work with the central administration, regardless of how your system is structured, is to regard it as one huge resource. Here you can find assistance with questions about curriculum, public relations, communications, grant development, special education, alternative programs and adult programs. The central administration also has information on the school's budget, and support services such as school lunches, transportation, and maintenance of the schoolhouse.

WHY DO WE HAVE A CENTRAL OFFICE?

While every school has a population or program that makes it unique, there are some aspects of schooling that can be standardized and economized within a school district. The curriculum, for example, is the course of study for all students in the district. It is written by teachers, specialists, and consultants, and is polished, printed, and distributed by central office personnel. Content and teaching strategies are suggested by central office but interpretation is usually left to the individual schools.

While it has become popular for schools to individualize their curriculum and instructional methods, such activity can become highly complicated, especially in large cities where students move from school to school within a district. Having a centralized curriculum in this situation is highly desirable.

Very often, state or federal laws, such as

special education, Chapter 1, or other special programs, must be followed in creating or adapting curriculum or services for students. Central office personnel who have received specialized training in these areas can be very helpful. Business management services such as budget management, hiring, placement of staff, school lunches, transportation, and ordering of materials and supplies may also be standardized at the central office level for maximum economy. In large school districts, it is not practical for a school system with 200 schools to hire 200 purchasing agents, 200 transportation coordinators, or 200 public relations specialists.

Suppose you want to determine how your school could be repainted. If your school has a sponsor who is willing to donate the paint and other materials needed to repaint the entire building, and through your parents' organization you have lined up a crew of volunteers, repainting the school might be easy. But before you begin, you need to know the amount of paint needed and whether there are any special restrictions about the types of paint you can use. Where do you turn within the central administration to get these answers? If your system has a facilities department, that is where you might try first. If you don't have a facilities department, or don't know if one exists, contact the public information office or the superintendent's office for assistance. Once you get your answers, you might even find a supervisor available to direct your efforts. Happy painting!

Not all dealings with the central administration will be that simple. Introducing new programs or initiatives

may be more difficult. Don't get discouraged. Remember, the central administration is a resource, and a school community has the right to seek authorization for programs it believes will be beneficial to students.

Work closely with your principal or parent's group to get answers to your questions from within the central administration. Approach and work with the directors, assistant superintendents, associate superintendents, deputy superintendents, or even the superintendent to understand the procedures to follow to get your initiative adopted or adapted for your school. The goal of the central administration is to provide the best educational opportunities available for the students.

WHERE DO CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS COME FROM?

Everyone at the central office of your district is a real person. They are just like you: they do their grocery shopping on weekends, attend their children's sports activities and PTA meetings, and struggle to find enough hours in the day to balance home and work responsibilities. Most have come up through the ranks, usually beginning their professional lives as teachers. Specialized college study and promotional opportunities have gotten them to the point where they are today.

If and when you decide to take the plunge and call the central administration for help or for answers, it's always helpful to get in touch with the appropriate person, or failing the right name, at least the right office. Be as specific as you can about the information you seek in order to help to

expedite your call. Always remember that the secretary, who will in most cases be your initial contact, can be tremendously helpful in steering you in the right direction. The more information the secretary has, the easier it will be to get you to the right person.

SOME HANDY DO'S AND DON'TS

DO

- * look upon the people at central office as a valuable resource.

- * try to be as specific as possible about your particular concern or problem.

- * get the person's name once you've obtained the information you want.

- * be patient when dealing with central office. Departments can be rather specialized; it may take a few referrals to get you hooked up with just the right person.

DON'T

- * assume that the "bureaucrats" at the central office are your natural enemies, as the popular media might have you believe.

They are people *just like you!*

- * be afraid to call upon central office for help.

- * get upset if the first person you call is unable to help you. Your neighbor's friend at central office may not be the right person to handle your particular situation.

- * let one less-than-pleasant encounter discourage you. Everyone has a bad day now and then.

- * forget that you are your child's best advocate. Central office is there to help you.

Now that you are ready to use the central administration of your school district for the resource that it is, good luck! You're well on your way to a successful partnership.

Nancy E. Gimbel is principal of Gardenville Elementary School and former director of Elementary Curriculum for the Baltimore City Public Schools.

THE CLERGY

Roger Joseph Gench

Who are the clergy? What Makes them tick? How do you get them and their congregations to help you in your school or community project? No single answer suffices, because the clergy are as varied in personality and perspectives as the congregations they serve. In fact, it is important to know that religious organizations do not all have the same outlook on community or school involvement. If you are going to ask a clergyperson for help in a project, it will be important for you to first understand the congregation that he or she serves.

TYPES OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Perhaps a sketch of the different kinds of communities that the clergy serve will be of some assistance. Let us consider five different types of church/synagogue communities. No church or other religious institution will exactly fit these descriptions. Some may, in fact, be a combination of types. The descriptions below will, however, give you a better understanding of the types of situations you may encounter as you seek to improve relationships between the clergy and your school.

Type 1: The Chameleon Community. Why the "Chameleon Community?" Because this congregation blends into its surroundings and takes on the characteristics of its members and their culture. Members of this type of community usually like things just the way they are. They perceive any type of

change as threatening. Because of this, the leaders of this type of congregation often have a difficult time getting their members involved in any type of activity, school or otherwise, that will challenge the status quo. In approaching the clergyperson(s) of this congregation, you will need to convince them that your project is non-threatening, and something that will appeal to a broad cross-section of the members.



Type 2: The Counter-Cultural Congregation. This type may also be called the "radical church of the underground." Typically, the members of this congregation strive not to love the world nor the things of the world. Salvation for them is otherworldly, and may entail the creation of a separatist community. In fact, since politics, materialism, and other factors have created the world as we know it, these things must be rejected. So community activism may be minimal.

For the counter-cultural community, our shopping malls with all their glitter and extravagance provide a snapshot of the world in all its perversion, as does the inner-city with all of its violence. Selling your school project to the leadership of the counter-cultural church may be difficult. In fact, they may be in the process of creating their own schools. Thus, you will have to convince them that God cares about the good of the whole community, and that your project seeks to do good. Good luck!

Type 3: The Social Activist Congregation. The counter-cultural and chameleon religious communities hardly exhaust our options. Another type of church/synagogue that you may encounter is the "social activist congregation." Members of this group consider separation from their community as socially irresponsible. Instead, they want to engage the world in order to make it more just. In fact, they would affirm that God is present in the best and noblest of our cultural and moral values. Whenever justice is sought or the hungry are fed, there are members of this congregation ministering to the needs of God's people.

The clergy leadership of the social activist congregation arms its members with magic markers and poster board, which they use to challenge local governments to establish justice and take responsibility for the poor. This congregation may even employ a social worker and probably provides support for refugees from politically repressive third world countries. Thus *in this congregation, you will probably find fruitful ground for sowing the seeds of your project.* But do keep in mind that this congregation is already involved in myriad

services and that hundreds of other solicitors come knocking at their door. Do your homework on socially activist clergy and their congregations!

Type 4: The Urban Camp for Guerilla Action. This model has only emerged in recent years. In Central America and in North American cities, this religious community is more and more being regarded as a seed-bed for non-violent revolution. For many religious people, the reforms of the social activist congregations have just not worked, the Chameleon Church has failed to challenge the exploitation of oppressed people, and the counter-cultural church is not even trying. The only answer, in their view, is non-violent revolution -- the throwing off of the yoke of their oppressor. Organization is key to this community. The clergy leadership in these congregations are committed to standing with the oppressed and against the structures of oppression -- structures that may include corporations, city governments, and overly bureaucratic school systems!

This community also is fruitful ground for sowing the seeds of your project. Keep in mind, however, that the leadership of this community is interested not so much in reform, but in revolutionary change in the system. More so than the Social Activist congregation, they are in for the long haul, and will not settle for incremental reform that doesn't lead to a radical overhaul of the system and to the empowerment of unempowered people.

Type 5: The Hideaway Church. This final model is out of step with all the preceding options, since its objective is to escape the savage competition, the stress, and the

frenetic pace of city life. This "Hideaway Church" of modern suburbia -- better known as "The Church of the Blessed Retreat," is a place where suburbanites go to get away from it all -- a place where friends and neighbors meet, and where children can discover the deeply held truths of religion. The clergy leadership of this community focuses on meeting the spiritual needs of their congregation. But that doesn't mean that social activism is dead. A project can be sold to such a congregation if it's in sync with deeply felt spiritual needs of its members.



To recap some of the more prevalent models of religious communities that you are likely to encounter as you attempt to forge a relationship with your school and community: The religious community can be a chameleon that blends into its surrounding culture, or a community that seeks separation from the world. The religious community can be an agent for social change, or a revolutionary front! Still again, the church, synagogue, or religious organization can be a quiet sanctuary -- a place to retreat with friends.

If you seek help from one or more of these communities, it will be critical to understand how they perceive *themselves* as a congregation, and how they perceive the world. When you meet with the clergy leadership, do your homework. Find out all you can about their congregation before you launch into your request for assistance. Most religious communities want to get involved, but will do so only on their own terms.

Some additional food for thought:

* A clergyperson's time is of the essence, so don't waste it! When you first make contact, tell your clergyperson how much time you will need and what topics you intend to cover. When you meet, stick to your agenda.

* While a clergyperson's time is valuable, so is relationship building. Don't avoid social niceties that would help you establish the relationship. But do your homework! If you have anything in common (perhaps common friends or acquaintances) talk about them as a way of introducing yourself.

* In addition to the local church or house of worship, most religious communities have councils and ecumenical leadership groups that you may want to approach. Your archdiocese or local board of rabbis are two examples.

* Religious schools may be ideal organizations with which to form partnerships. Contact the principals of individual schools.

* As a general rule, it is inappropriate to ask churches and synagogues to fund school projects. It's better to stick with those efforts where volunteer and technical assistance are warranted.

* When approaching the clergy for project assistance, propose narrowly defined projects that can be easily accomplished and where results can be reached.

* It's appropriate to compliment the clergy on some aspect of their ministry or congregational life. The clergy rarely receive compliments, and they will appreciate your kind words.

* Finally, and perhaps most importantly, know that there are certain rules separating religious and civil institutions, such as public schools. Make certain that your school's involvement with the religious community is specifically understood by all as non-religious in nature. Check with your school district to

be sure.

Roger Gench is Pastor of The Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church in Baltimore. Ira Schiffer, Rabbi of Beth Am Synagogue in Baltimore, also contributed to this chapter.

GETTING A CORPORATION ON YOUR SIDE

Elaine Urbanski

This section could very well be titled *Corporation Casseroles*. Casseroles contain all of the essential food basics you need to make a solid, nutritious meal. Likewise, corporations and businesses contain all of the ingredients to help your school with a successful project -- the "meat, potatoes, and vegetables" are all in one location and can be blended to meet your particular needs.

WHY DOES A BUSINESS WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR SCHOOL?



It makes good sense. A firm's most valuable asset is its consumers -- and today's youngsters grow up to be tomorrow's consumers. They also may become future employees and stockholders of the firm. They also become our elected officials, hospital workers, lawyers, secretaries, and technicians. Businesses realize that they need to begin helping students, teachers, parents and schools in order to have a better society and hence a better business future.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO CONSIDER HAVING A BUSINESS INVOLVED WITH YOUR SCHOOL?

The most obvious answer is that "they have lots of money." But don't approach a business with \$\$\$ on your mind -- at least not at first. Keep in mind that while

a corporation may be large, it is still made up of people -- people that want to get to know you and your school before blindly signing a check.

In a corporation of 1,000 to 20,000 employees, one of its biggest assets is indeed its **people**. Big businesses have employees with a wide variety of skills, talent, and knowledge. Another plus is that they have many diverse departments--training and development, engineering, personnel, security, government relations, printing, public relations, facilities management, etc. You may want to keep these departments in mind while trying to decide how a particular company may be able to help your school.

HOW DO YOU APPROACH A MAJOR CORPORATION WITH YOUR REQUEST? WHO DO YOU ASK?

Ask someone you know. Right? As an 18-year employee of a major corporation, I can tell you that on numerous occasions when I tell someone that I work for the company, their first response is, "Oh, do you know so and so?" Usually, the answer is no! The fact is that the company is so large and so spread out that it is difficult to know everyone.

Usually, when you make a decision to ask a business for help with a project, your first impulse might be to find out who knows someone at the corporation --

someone who has a "connection" or "an inside door." Even if you find someone who says, "Yes, I know John Smith in the Accounting Department," don't approach John Smith with your idea or project. It is not appropriate for John Smith, at his level, to take your project up the corporate ladder.

Suppose you know someone who is the "Educational Person" for that company -- an Elaine Urbanski type? You might start by calling the Educational Representative and then asking her to direct you to the appropriate level. Keep in mind that while she may ultimately be delegated the job of "checking out" your request, you still may need to send a written request to the top of the house.

The appropriate level is the Chairman of the Board and/or the President, depending on the firm. If you're not sure who that person is or his/her title, call the company's general information number and ask for the data. While you're at it, also request a copy of the corporation's annual report. The annual report will give you information about the financial status of the company as well as a personal peek into daily operations and the employees who perform the work. Any other background information that you can obtain about the company will also be helpful.

DO A CORPORATION ANALYSIS

Some things that you may want to know before submitting your proposal are:

- *What is the mission of the corporation?*
- *Is the company active in the community?*

Are they involved in volunteer activities?

- *Are employees of the firm involved as board members of various non-profit organizations?*
- *Has the corporation assisted other schools? How? Which ones?*
- *Does the company grant its employees work release time?*
- *Is the company going through some financial difficulties at the present time? (If so, you may not want to ask for \$\$\$ -- but you can still ask for people resources .)*
- *Did the company recently undergo a shift in top management? (Should you "let the dust settle" before making your pitch for help?)*

Going through this "Corporation Analysis" will help you in writing your proposal and in making a sales pitch to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

TARGET YOUR CORPORATION AND INGREDIENTS

If you've done the "Corporation Analysis" on several major firms, you now face the decision on whom to approach with your project. You may want to target the company whose mission most closely reflects your proposed idea.

For example, if your school wants to implement a drug awareness or health program, you may wish to approach a hospital. To be even more specific, you may wish to approach a hospital near your school, especially if that hospital is noted

for its volunteer activities.

If you're looking for volunteers to run an after-school "Future Scientists of America" Club, you may wish to approach an engineering firm.

You may want to target the company whose mission most closely reflects your proposed idea.

Keep in mind that the corporation you are approaching may have all the ingredients you need to assist your school with a particular project -- but do you want to ask for *everything*?

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU ARE ASKING FOR TOO LITTLE OR TOO MUCH?

Let's look at this example: You want to ask a corporation to help you with increasing parent involvement at your school. You can:

- Ask the company for \$\$\$ to cover the cost of a speaker on "parent burnout."
- Ask the company for a representative to sit on a school-based committee to carry out three parent workshops at your school.
- Ask the company to provide artwork, printing and mailing services, and refreshments, and pay for the speaker.

Which one would you choose? Number one asks for too little in a cool, impersonal way. Number three asks for everything, leading the business to wonder what the school is doing for itself. Number two is

the best response. A business representative becomes personally involved and may bring planning and marketing expertise to the process. It is also likely that financial help will follow.

THE SALES PITCH -- COVER LETTER AND PROPOSAL

You've done your background checks and your target marketing. Now it's time to make the pitch. Write a clear, concise, one-page letter to the Chairman of the Board or President. Paragraph one should contain who you are and the purpose of the letter.

On behalf of the ABC School's PTA, we are requesting your assistance in helping us conduct three parent workshops during this school year.

Insert a statement about WHY you are requesting the services of their firm:

As a leader in marketing and advertising, we think that with your expertise we will be able to enhance parent involvement at our school.

Let them know you have GOALS:

Our goal this year is to increase parent involvement by 20 percent...

Throw in those statistics!

...Numerous studies have shown that parent involvement increases academic achievement and it is our desire to have all of our students performing to the best of their ability.

Paragraph two: State your specific intent:

We are requesting the services of one employee from your firm to be a member of our parent/teacher committee to plan and carry out the program objectives.

Tell them how much time is involved:

Our meetings are held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month from September to April. We meet at the school in room 102 from 2:30-4:00 p.m.

Final paragraph: Thank the firm for any support they have given you in the past. Give a response deadline and tell them to whom to reply as well as whom to call if they have additional questions.

A request of this nature may not need a lengthy proposal attached. However, you may want to include support materials on why parent involvement is so important.

GO FOR THE GOLD -- THE BIG PROPOSAL



Scenario: The school has an outstanding three-year plan to increase the reading level of all third grade students. You need 50 volunteers and \$80,000 to make it work. Think about approaching a business in one of the following ways:

■ Ask one business to sponsor the entire proposal. You may find a corporation that is ready to make a concerted long-term commitment to a worthwhile project -- they may also want to "take credit" for the entire project.

■ Ask three major firms to each sponsor one-third (volunteers and \$\$\$) of the

proposal. Note: Ask one firm at a time; if they say yes, you'll have a lot of leverage when you approach the other two businesses. Be sure to mention in your cover letter the others who will be involved with the proposal.

■ Ask one business to supply the volunteers; write a grant to obtain the funding. Note: Get the volunteers first; again, the "business" connection will carry weight when you make your request for funding.

There is no one best approach in this scenario. Depending on the proposal and the information about the company(s) you will be approaching -- the decision is yours.

FOLLOW-UP WHEN THE ANSWER IS YES!

I am an optimist in assuming that the corporation will get back to you about your request provided that your deadline is reasonable. If they do not, pick up the phone and make an inquiry. Once they say yes to your request, immediately write a thank you letter to the CEO or President. There is still nothing more pleasant to anyone than a polite thank you note. I realize that it seems trite to even mention this -- but you'd be surprised how many people forget this one courtesy.

At this point your request for help will have been assigned to the appropriate department/person in the corporation. Your next step is to schedule a face-to-face meeting with your contact person. The best place to hold that meeting is at your school. This is your chance to show them what you have and what you don't

have. Give them the *grand tour* and please don't keep them waiting in an empty conference room "because you have one more item to attend to." Again, this is coming from experience -- I've wasted my time waiting for others and have even walked out of meetings that started 20 minutes late. Your business "partner" should show you the same respect.

...Please don't keep them waiting in an empty conference room "because you have one more item to attend to."

The *grand tour* is important because your business contact may not be familiar with your school or may not have even entered a school building in 20 years! A handout with background about your school's characteristics would be very helpful. Give your business representative some concrete lessons about your students, teachers, parents, and the community at-large. Also, share some personal information about yourself and ask questions of your business contact. The first meeting needs to include some "relationship building." You can't jump into a task without getting to know each other first. Finally, set up regular meetings with your contact person to accomplish your goals.

FOLLOW-UP WHEN THE ANSWER IS NO!

Don't be discouraged when the answer is no. Do find out why. If you find out the reason why a firm turned down your proposal, you'll learn more about how to approach the next corporation. You may have followed all of these steps to the

letter-- but the *timing* was off. Also, your proposal may be open to negotiation. It could be that the company couldn't do everything you wanted but they are willing to help in one area. A telephone call to inquire about other possibilities can't hurt, if you use diplomacy.

Whatever the outcome, follow-up with a thank you note.

EVALUATION

Business people like to see results. Build into your initial proposal the method that you intend to use to evaluate the success of your endeavor. You can even get the business to help you measure the program's effectiveness. The main point here is that you formulate a plan for accomplishing this task. It's important to the business -- and I know it's important to you.

CORPORATION CASSEROLE COMPLETED!

If you take all of the ingredients listed, add your own unique flavorings and give the relationship time to "bake," you'll have a wonderful "corporation casserole." Furthermore, everything is in one "pot" that requires less coordination, easier evaluation and little "clean up." Think about asking a business to get on your side. By mixing your talents and spices, you will be able to serve your school a delicacy beyond all expectations!

Whatever the outcome, follow-up with a thank you note.

**OVERBAKING AND UNDERBAKING: A
SUMMARY OF DO'S AND DON'TS**

DO take the plunge. Initiate a relationship with a big business.

DO approach the appropriate level of management in the corporation.

DO your homework. Find out all you can about the corporation.

DO target your company and your proposal.

DON'T limit your sights -- go for the gold!

DON'T forget to say thank you.

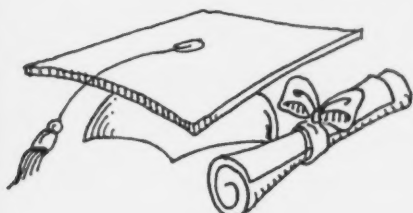
DON'T be intimidated by a business executive. Inform him/her about your school's needs.

DON'T pass up the opportunity to do a dynamite EVALUATION. And then publicize your success story.

Elaine Urbanski is the Educational Representative for the Baltimore Gas & Electric Company.

WORKING WITH COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Homer Schamp



Some of the most effective and productive partnerships that can be developed are those between schools and colleges and universities. Colleges -- both public and private -- are teeming with individuals who have chosen to work in such an institution because they believe in its ideals, enjoy working with other people, and have expertise in one or more areas of knowledge or skill. Most of them are aware of their somewhat privileged position in society, and have a heightened sense of civic responsibility because of that position. They want to help you with your school and community endeavors.

On the other hand, college and university professors and staff tend to be impatient when asked to respond to very general requests for help. A request to a biologist to "send me everything you have on insects," for example, is not likely to lead to a worthwhile exchange. Why? Because most college staffers are trained in very specific disciplines. They are more often than not focused on the "tree" while the general public is focused on the "forest."

This does not mean that university personnel can't help you define what your specific needs are. This is precisely where they might make their greatest contribution. Analysis of complicated

situations, and particularly those that require in-depth evaluation, is the life's work of many a professor. The following section will help pave the way for you to make an initial contact with a college or university.

PREPARING THE WAY

School/community projects are sometimes born because one or more individuals sense that something is wrong and can be improved. The need may appear to be very specific, leading to a temptation to find a simple solution. However, there is rarely a simple solution, because any single change affects other aspects of the school's program or the community's response.

If an individual from a college or university is going to be asked to participate in your project, then one of the most effective pieces of work that can be done in advance is to write down the following:

- your observations of the problem or issue at hand;
- your short term and long term goals to address the problem;
- a description of the school and/or community.

Such a paper should be brief (2-3 pages) and stated in simple language. There may be some special items that are important to include in your paper so that a person

outside the community can more readily understand the problem and the urgency felt by those concerned. For example, if the current situation represents a deterioration from earlier, happier circumstances, it is important to contrast the two periods of time and indicate what some of the changes have been.

The concept paper is also important to aid the school in deciding whether the help proposed by the college or university is likely to be useful in solving the problem.

UNDERSTANDING THE ORGANIZATION

Often, schools and community groups only think of college and university faculty members when they decide that some problem is on the horizon. This perception is unnecessarily limiting, and deprives many talented individuals in these institutions of contributing to your various projects.

It is appropriate to think of a college or university (public or private) as a **corporation**. In addition to the academic departments, there are a number of other offices or departments that may be able to give valuable advice and assistance. For example, the administration of a college always includes a business office with individuals skilled in finance, planning, personnel, and purchasing. There is a physical plant office in which individuals plan, oversee, and perform construction work.

The Admissions Office. There is an admissions office, a financial aid office, and an office of student life. Often, a project needs a large number of young

volunteers. One of the functions of an office of student life is to coordinate the activities of many student groups. On most campuses, there are student service organizations, some of them general, others with more specialized functions. The quickest way to tap into these organizations is usually through the office of student life.

The University Library. Closely allied with the academic departments is the college or university library. Librarians devote their entire career to being of service to their patrons. They are often an overlooked resource. Many are experienced in research and can greatly enhance the amount of information available to a project.

Tutoring and Student Services. Often, there is an office to provide tutoring to students registered in the college or university. This office may be called a learning resources center, or some other name that does not make it clear that it provides tutoring services. You may need to make some inquiries to find it. Staff in this office are skilled in working with students who have a wide range of preparation and ability, and they are likely to have a number of students who are trained as tutors.

Audio/Video Department. There may also be a Media Technology Center that prepares instructional materials. The professionals in such an office are experts in preparing slides, audiotapes, videotapes, and other items that are invaluable for presentations or as adjuncts to a program of instruction. Often these offices are "self-supporting," meaning that they have a very small budget for materials and staff,

but the professional advice they dispense can be extremely valuable.

It is appropriate to think of a college or university (public or private) as a corporation. In addition to the academic departments, there are a number of other offices or departments that may be able to give valuable advice and assistance.

Public Affairs and Development. Finally, two offices that are often overlooked by groups seeking assistance are the office of public affairs and the development office. The first of these can provide advice on such necessities as making a presentation, getting publicity, and designing and printing a brochure.

The development office conducts fund-raising activities for the benefit of the college or university. Though your own program may appear to conflict with this interest, such conflict is not inevitable. The sources of money that you're interested in tapping may be entirely different from those accessible to the college or university. In any case, development officers can give you valuable pointers on what to do and what not to do. If you intend to apply for a grant from a local, state, or federal agency, they can direct you to sources of information within the university.

College Interns. The most plentiful resource at all colleges and universities are the students themselves! Many departments encourage or require internships and field experiences,

particularly at the graduate level. In addition, many campuses have service clubs, charitable organizations, and fraternity and sorority groups that are available to assist the public in a wide variety of activities, from tutoring to advocacy to social services. Contact should be made directly with academic departments and the school's office of student life.

KNOWING YOUR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY PARTNER

To work efficiently with a particular institution of higher education, one must have some knowledge of it. Each one is different despite some common features. Perhaps the quickest and most efficient way of getting this information is to study the catalog. Catalogs can usually be obtained by calling the admissions office. Much of the catalog is devoted to descriptions of academic programs and courses that are likely to be of little value to you, but you can still obtain a flavor for the school's specialties. The catalog contains a list of all faculty, along with their specialties and affiliations

It is important to know how a college or university "works" so as not to be frustrated when dealing with such institutions. Colleges and universities are not "hierarchical;" faculty members in particular are likely to consider their highest loyalty to their profession or discipline, not to any individual in the administration. Although there are department chairpersons, deans, and vice-presidents and presidents, none of these individuals has any direct authority to influence faculty members to work on any

project.

Somewhat the same situation prevails in non-academic departments. A supervisor of such a department cannot demand participation from his staff. Academic institutions run on *persuasion*; a convincing argument is much more persuasive than a direct order. Ultimately, this is a great strength, because those who do decide to participate in your project will be doing so because they are convinced of its merit and their capacity to make a contribution.

ESTABLISHING A TIME FRAME FOR THE PROJECT

Some cooperative projects between schools and colleges and universities continue for years, although this is not the typical case. Unless a project contributes to the institution's mission of teaching or research, or unless it fits within the institution's funded public service program, provision must be made for completing the project within a few years. Most foundations and agencies will not give continuing support to a project that shows no evidence of becoming "institutionalized"-- being made part of the regular structure of an established program or organization.

EVALUATION AND CONTINUITY

To become institutionalized, a project must have demonstrated its effectiveness. Before any new program is added to an existing budget, the organization must usually eliminate or curtail another program. To have high enough priority to justify the elimination of existing programs, the clear superiority of the new program must be evident. Many highly effective

programs have been terminated because inadequate attention has been paid to documenting accomplishments and proving cost effectiveness (in other words, *bang for the buck!*). So the best time to begin preparing for the end of the project is before it begins! It is impossible to prove that a project has had any effect unless the baseline data are established before the project begins. This requires a carefully detailed plan for data collection, evaluation, and cost-effectiveness. Preparing the baseline data is often the most valuable contribution that a person from a college or university can make to a project. Departments of Psychology, Sociology and Colleges of Education all have people skilled in the research techniques necessary for performing such work. Results are always more convincing if the group carrying out the evaluation is not directly involved in the project.

SUMMARY

Colleges and universities have the potential to make significant contributions to community and school programs. Their effectiveness can be greatly increased if schools and communities spend some time in learning about the institution and getting acquainted with the full range of available talent. Usually, the resources that a college or university can bring to bear on a problem are professional services rather than equipment, supplies, or physical facilities. All institutions expect that their faculty will devote some effort to providing professional services to the community. Although not specifically charged with doing so, many other staff persons also are happy to provide help when needed.

Any project should have a clearly defined plan for evaluation and a scheme for "institutionalizing" the activities of the program.

Dr. Schamp recently retired as Acting Director of the University of Maryland System Center for Excellence in Urban Education, located at Coppin State College.

FOUNDATIONS

Jan Rivitz

The purpose of this chapter is to describe a very important ingredient in the development of school and community projects. Foundations play a major role in funding programs that might not otherwise receive governmental support, but are nevertheless important to your students, neighbors, and other citizens.

Later in this book, you will read about recipes for conducting projects and writing grants to support them. Although you may follow the recipe to perfection, you should remember that one of your key ingredients, the foundation, can be very unpredictable! Unlike yeast, the foundation may not "rise to the occasion" every time. However, that doesn't mean you shouldn't apply for funds. You may have to apply a few times before you actually obtain a grant.

In many ways, this chapter, designed to describe an *ingredient*, may actually be considered a *recipe* for successfully establishing rapport with a foundation. HAPPY COOKING!

♦♦♦

INGREDIENTS FOR GETTING A FOUNDATION GRANT

* KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

The *Foundation Directory* defines "foundation" in the following way:

A foundation is a non-profit organization created for the purposes of establishing or maintaining charitable,

educational, religious, social, and other activities for the common good. Because foundations enjoy special tax privileges, they are required to donate at least five percent of the market value of their assets to charitable causes.

This is about the only thing one can say for sure about all foundations. Beyond this legal definition, **no two foundations are alike.**

They differ in many ways including donors, charter, by-laws, trustees and other governance issues, staff, grantmaking focus, guidelines for giving, applications, how decisions are made, and available resources. It is important to know as much about these things as possible.

How do you find out? There are three basic ways:

1. Use the informal network. Gather information from people who know the foundation that you're interested in; talk to people who have secured a grant from a particular foundation. And never underestimate the importance of knowing about the personalities of foundation staff.
2. Get a copy of the foundation's guidelines and other information. Write or call the foundation for a copy of their guidelines, annual report, and application forms (some foundations may not have them). Some foundations use a common application form that is available upon request from the foundation or the local

Association of Grantmakers.

3. Go to the library. Use the directories available in the main branch of your local library. There is usually a Foundation Collection with up-to-date information on all grantmakers. The staff will be happy to help you use these directories to research foundations that might be interested in your proposal.

Periodically, some local foundation officials will host a training session on conducting such research. Try to attend one of these sessions.

* *KNOW YOUR PRODUCT*

Packaging your "product" or writing a grant proposal is covered in another chapter of the *Cookbook*. But once it is written, it is entirely up to you to sell it. In order to do this, you must know what's in there, what you are trying to accomplish, and be strongly committed to its merits. If you don't believe in it, a foundation never will. It's up to you to make your proposal come alive for someone who has just read nine other proposals before getting to yours, or has heard presentations from five other committed, dynamic, and charismatic "salespersons" before meeting with you.

* *KNOW YOUR COMPETITION*

And there is more of it than you can possibly imagine. Your perfect grant proposal that took hours and hours of hard work and sweat will arrive in the mail at the foundation office with a twelve inch stack of identical looking 8-1/2 by 11 inch brown manilla envelopes and will be greeted with the requisite groan familiar to

all foundation staff people. Inside these envelopes will be proposals similar in format to yours, proofread twenty times so that there is not one spelling error or typo, and promising to change the future of every child lucky enough to receive the proposed intervention with the help of foundation dollars, which is, at this particular point in time, looking more like "spare change."

Know this. Acknowledge this. But above all, understand and articulate why your project is different, unique, and fills a previously unmet need.

* *KNOW THE ART OF NEGOTIATION*

A successful "deal" only gets made when both sides are convinced that they have each won something. In a deal between the grantee (the person who gets) and the grantor (the giver), the "win" for the grantee is obvious -- they get the bucks to run their project. But the win on the grantor side varies, as in everything else, with the particular foundation. The win, or what a foundation would consider in business terms, a return on investment, can be quantified in any number of ways:

- You did what you said you'd do according to budget.
- You gained public recognition for the foundation or company.
- You leveraged (raised) other (matching) funding resources.
- You won the attention of policy makers.
- You showed positive outcomes for those participating in your program.
- You changed the way that public dollars are allocated, and the way that public services are delivered.

These are some of the "returns" foundations look for. But it is important to know what a particular foundation calls a win, and for you to be able to offer them one.

TECHNIQUES

The basic ingredients above are necessary for getting a foundation grant. But "technique" is just as important as ingredients. The following list of techniques takes practice, experience, and a degree of luck.

* GETTING A MEETING

The phrase "It's not what you know but who you know" is important to remember. It's always beneficial to get a meeting with a foundation, but not always easy. It is often important to use someone "well-connected" to speak on your behalf. Use your resources -- administrators, principals, community representatives, or friends -- in order to find someone who has a personal relationship with the foundation.

* BEHAVING IN A MEETING

- Be prepared, brief, and **ON TIME**.
- Listen carefully, and whenever possible, agree!
- Remember the accusation often leveled at foundations -- "the only good idea is their own." This is more than likely to be true.
- Never whine.
- Never make a staff person feel guilty for not funding you.
- Be meticulous and timely in follow-up meetings or correspondence.
- Be abundant in thank you's.
- Never sound desperate.

- Always make eye contact.
- Don't be afraid to be proud of past accomplishments.
- Always invite a foundation to your "turf," knowing that they won't always come.
- Always focus on who benefits from your project.

* FLEXIBILITY

Be firm, but flexible. Foundations have many objectives of their own, and their tendency, if they are at all interested in you, is to try to get you to help them meet one of those objectives. If it is something that can be comfortably integrated into your project, by all means consider it! If it takes you far afield from your mission, then graciously pass on the opportunity.

* PATIENCE

For the most part, foundations work on their schedules, not yours. Leave plenty of time between asking for the grant, and the actual implementation. Also be prepared to provide additional information, answer many more questions than you've already addressed, write and rewrite, and often just wait for an answer or acknowledgement.

Securing a foundation grant is often the result of building a relationship over time, and developing trust. This takes time and patience.

* PRAYER

If you believe in it, *it can't hurt to use it!!*

◆◆◆

Having listed ingredients and techniques,

I must remind you again that even if all the elements are perfect, the recipe might fail. If it does, you should attempt to analyze the reason. I offer the following checklist for conducting the analysis:

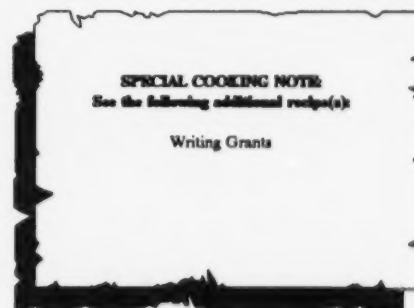
- You reached the wrong audience, and should pursue other foundation sources. Keep working.
- The proposal is well-conceived, but there is no interest among several potential grantors. At this point, I suggest shelving the project and using energies elsewhere.
- Demands on foundations were too great and there is a better time to revisit them. Dust it off at a later date.

KEEPING IT FRESH

The final part of this chapter refers to "Keeping it Fresh" if you are lucky enough to have it turn out and get funded. This is very important! Getting a foundation grant is difficult. Don't waste the opportunity by having it get stale.

- Receive the grant graciously and enthusiastically.
- Thank the foundation publicly, if possible, but always get their permission first.
- Involve the foundation in as much of the implementation as their interest dictates.
- Invite them to the school or classroom often to show off your joint accomplishments.

- Use the same amount of care in preparing progress reports as you did in preparing the requests.
- If evaluation requires data collection, be thorough and meticulous.
- Continuously check your progress against your proposal's time line.
- Communicate with the foundation if there are any problems. Foundations are much more understanding if a project runs into snags while there is still time to make an adjustment than they are if you wait until the end of a grant period and surprise them with a failure.
- Stay in regular contact after the project has been completed. Let them know the longer term results of their involvement and investment.



Jan Rivitz is Executive Director of The Aaron Straus and Lillie Straus Foundation, Inc, and the past president of the Association of Baltimore Area Grant Makers (ABAG).

MEDIA RELATIONS: WORKING WITH NEWS REPORTERS

Jay Merwin

RECIPE : Media Relations

INGREDIENTS: Administrators, teachers, and students, mixed with news reporters.

PREPARATIONS:

Facts. Be prepared to talk about what you know, or to refer the reporter to someone else who might be available.



Reporters often work on daily deadlines that leave them little time to wait for some other more convenient time. Reporters work for editors who want the story *now*. Good reporters look around with their eyes and with their questions. They report what they find, though that may not always be what the school community wants to present. Recitation of a narrow set of facts emphasizing only the best possible interpretation of a story is never convincing to a reporter. Knowing your school and your job (if you work in a school), and being able to share some of that knowledge as you would explain it to a friend -- the good news with the not-so-good news -- is the best preparation.

INSTRUCTIONS: Mix, which means, let administrators, teachers, and students talk to reporters.

DO'S and DON'T'S: **DO** try to say something if a reporter wants to know what's going on, even if it's only a little information. **DON'T** panic or repeat "no comment" to each question. That only arouses the reporter's suspicion, perhaps where none should exist, that you have something to hide. If you don't like how a reporter's story turned out, **DO** call and say so! Eventually, if the reporter is doing the job right, and you're on the level, a positive relationship will form.

♦♦♦

The difference between the benefits of working with the media and the hazards of avoiding them were most obvious to me when I arrived one winter day to cover a story about something terrible - a shooting in a school hallway.

It wasn't the first shooting at that school in recent years. One school official there who had seen it all, and perhaps more than he could handle, refused to talk to



me about what had happened. "Please leave," he said. After he said that, a different school official volunteered to take me on a tour of the school, to

the spot where a fight had begun between two young men, where one pulled a gun and fired, wounding the other.

Think of the difference between these two attitudes. The school official who asked me to leave apparently thought that my newspaper should overlook a major crime at a school, where someone could easily have been killed. Presumably, the information would have been kept from the parents, or else they would be left to learn what they could from their children. *Don't they deserve a full explanation?*

Compare that approach with that of the other school official who took me on a tour of the halls. As we walked, he calmed nervous students who approached him, hushed a noisy cafeteria, and disciplined rowdy students moving between classes. He wanted to show me that despite the shooting, life would go on at this school, and he was in charge. *Parents, and readers generally, had a chance to read that perspective in my story about the shooting.*

I understand why some people, especially those in the schools, don't want to talk to people who do what I do for a living. After seeing so many unflattering media stories about the schools, they don't want to risk participating in another one. They might invite reporters to their schools for the occasional ceremonial dedication of a new computer laboratory, but not for anything substantive. And if reporters fail to show up for the dedication ceremony, these officials are only confirmed in their belief that the media want only "negative" stories, never "positive" ones.

Actually, news reporting doesn't work that way. When officials refuse to talk about bad news, that only arouses further suspicions among reporters that the school has something to hide. Each "no comment," each demand that we avoid a

"negative story," confirms in us the belief that the people who say that don't want us to know about some failure or incompetence that the community of taxpayers and parents should know about.



Concerning the specific instance of the two school officials I encountered at the shooting, my relationship with the one who stiffed me never improved. I had to persist with inquiries for several weeks to get his permission to sit in on a student discussion group on violence prevention -- presumably, a constructive response by the school to the shooting and one that would make for a good story.



But my relationship with the other official who took me on a tour blossomed thereafter. In my unbidden appearance at his school for a tragic story, he and I developed a rapport and trust that led to other stories about the school. From our conversation walking the halls that sad day, I learned about how he and a group of faculty and students ran a concession stand at the baseball stadium to raise money for projects and equipment that the school could not otherwise afford on its budget from the city. A few months later, I visited the stand while he and others sweated over a hamburger grill during the ball game, and I wrote about it. From my conversations that summer night, in a more relaxed atmosphere than the afternoon of the shooting, I got more

ideas for more stories.

In none of these stories -- from the one about the shooting or those that followed -- did I approach with a mission to write something "positive" or "negative" about the school. But unfortunately, some people believe this is how the media does its job. Rather, I write what is obviously news, such as a violent crime in a school, and follow my interests from there. I really don't worry whether my stories conform to school officials' preferred image of the school system or not, though I am well aware that certain events I cover or information I gather does affect public perceptions about the school. But it's not my business as a reporter to serve as a full partner or enemy to the school or school system in shaping those images. *I write what I see, and try to pursue other ideas that arise from that experience.*

Often what interests me, and possibly other reporters as well, lies buried in the press release, or in the memory of an administrator, teacher, or student I might meet. An education reporter's desk is often inundated with press releases on school publicity stunts, some worthwhile, some not, and some that prove to be valuable leads into much larger stories.

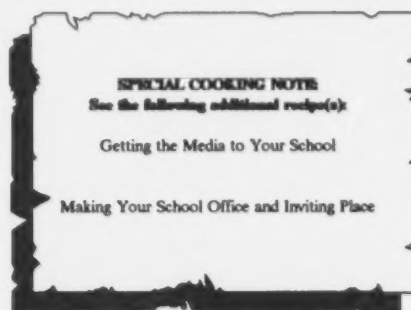
For that reason alone, I have taken up many press release invitations just to see what I can gather. Sometimes, nothing comes of it, other times, I get an idea.

For example, when I followed the mayor on one of his planned appearances in which he tried to highlight some

overlooked aspect of the school system, I found a school that was on the leading edge of a new approach to providing early and positive male reinforcement to young black males in inner city schools. It was an elementary school, where the principal had set up an all male class. One of the few male teachers in the elementary school system was teaching it.

I wrote a story about the class, combining it with other information from an earlier meeting among scholars, educators, politicians, and other leaders to discuss ways of institutionalizing such an approach throughout the school system. That story later prompted other reporters on my paper to expand on the subject with a three-part series.

I was glad I followed the mayor on this particular publicity outing. But I began to wonder how many other such independent initiatives I might find in other schools, if the schools and the people who run them were more accessible.



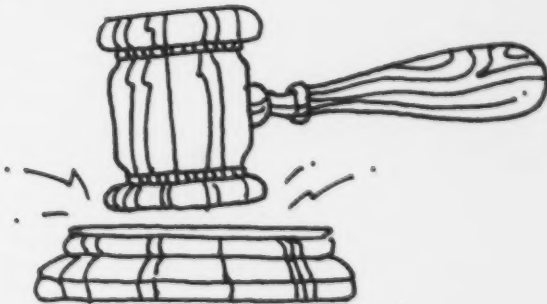
*Jay Merwin is a reporter for the **Evening Sun** who has previously covered city schools.*

THE SCHOOL BOARD

Armita Hicks McArthur

The mere mention of "School Board" evokes many different emotions among those involved with schools. Often loved and often scorned, the role of school board members has been thrust into the limelight as school districts across America brace for what promises to be a revolution in the way in which schools go about their business of educating our youth. Consequently, it's now more important than ever to understand some of the common characteristics of the group, their responsibilities, and the types of issues they address.

This chapter will help you to better understand issues facing school boards and what you should be aware of when working with this very important ingredient.



ROLES AND ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS OF BOARDS

It is generally the charge of boards:

- * to serve the children of their school district as a first priority;
- * to be the eyes and ears of the public with regard to educational issues;
- * to learn about and act on the public's educational standards and needs;
- * to prepare educational policy;
- * to percolate the community's interest in education.

School boards take on many forms. This chapter relates to typical urban boards. The School Board, or Board of School Commissioners, as it is known in many cities, is typically made up of volunteers appointed by the Mayor or elected by the public at large. Many board members serve without compensation. Often, members are chosen based on their ability to promote the interest of public education by reason of their insight, character, education, business experience, and personality.

The President of the Board presides at Board meetings and calls special meetings whenever he/she deems necessary. The members of the Board often nominate a Board member to serve as vice-president. The vice-president typically presides at any regular or special meetings of the Board in the absence of the president.

Most boards have *standing committees*, or panels of members that have special responsibilities. Standing committees usually include but are not limited to the following:

Budget and Finance
Curriculum, Planning, and Evaluation
Personnel and Credentials
Rules
Facilities
Intergovernmental Relations

Ad hoc committees are appointed from time-to-time as the need arises, and may concern issues such as discipline, technology, or redistricting.

ATTENDING BOARD MEETINGS: YOUR RIGHT AND YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!

* **Meeting Dates.** School Board meetings are usually held at regular, published intervals throughout the year. These meetings are open to the public. Check with the school system's Office of Communications for dates, places, and times.

Special hearings are called to address specific issues of importance. These usually occur at the beginning and end of a major study.

Many board members serve without compensation. Often, members are chosen based on their ability to promote the interest of public education by reason of their insight, character, education, business experience, and personality.

* **Addressing the Board.** Persons wishing to address the Board at a public meeting usually register the request(s) in writing, although many boards now have open forums at the beginning or end of the meeting.

When you address the board, please be brief and to the point. Board meetings can last for from one to several hours, and include virtually every issue under the sun. You will find that having written comments to follow your presentation will have a bigger impact on the members, and may result in a more satisfactory response to the issue at hand.

BOARD ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES*

* **Policy Making.** While the Board is ultimately responsible for all district concerns, the Board's major function is *policy making*. These include, but are not limited to, employment of personnel, the provision of pupil services and educational programs, instructional materials, school facilities, equipment, finance, and support services. The Board can adopt policy upon the recommendation of the superintendent, but the final decision on policy cannot be made by the superintendent. The Board develops policies. It also has the authority to evaluate policy through observations, special oversight studies, and periodic reports by administrative officers.

Other board responsibilities include:

* **Designating the Chief Executive.** The Board is responsible for recruiting, hiring and evaluating the performance of the superintendent of schools, who will carry out its policy.

* **Planning, Goal Setting, and Appraisal.** The Board is responsible for establishing the current and long-range educational plans and programs for its district. It is ultimately responsible for the appraisal of the results of these programs.

* **Establishing Financial Plans.** The Board is responsible for the approval and adoption of the annual budget that will provide the financial basis for the buildings, furnishings, staff, materials, and equipment needed to carry out educational programs. In many cities, boards have the power to levy taxes. In others, resources are tied to other taxing authorities, such as the Mayor or Town Council. Nevertheless, all boards play a critical role in *allocating* resources for education. Therefore, every citizen should keep abreast of the actions of the board with regard to resources.

* **Staffing and Appraisal.** The Board is responsible for establishing policy governing salaries and salary schedules, terms and conditions of employment, fringe benefits, leaves, and in-service training. Again, the influence of the board in this role cannot be underestimated, since in many cities and towns across America, school system employees form a large proportion of the total municipal or town work force. This role tends to have intense political ramifications in many school districts.

* **Instruction.** The Board sets general goals and adopts policies upon which instructional programs are based, all of which must always be in accordance with state laws and regulations. It is critically important to note that responsibility for education is generally vested in *states*, rather than local jurisdictions. Therefore, while local boards of education are empowered to make major personnel, policy, and instructional decisions, they are limited to the extent permitted by state law.

* **School Facilities.** The Board is responsible for determining school house needs, communicating those needs to its community, purchasing, disposing of or leasing of school sites, and for approving building plans that will support and enhance educational programs. Facility needs are directly related to the entire instructional program, and the board must respond accordingly.

* **Students.** Although students are the primary "clients" of the board and the recipients of all benefits, the Board does not deal *directly* with students. Rather, it sets the policies which guide the actions of administrative and other school staff *in support* of students.

IN THE BOARD ROOM



"This school board meeting is nothing.
You should see us when we get organized!"

Reprinted from *Becoming a Better Board Member*,
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Boards Association. All rights reserved.

* **Public Relations.** An effective Board member must maintain on-going personal

communication with the entire school community. The Board must ensure that an adequate means for keeping in touch with its citizenry exists.

*** Adjudication and Investigation.** Often, the Board must respond to appeals for school staff members or students on issues which involve Board policy. Student expulsions from school, criminal activities on the part of staff members, and other matters for which policies have been established are frequently subject to direct intervention by the Board.

WHO ARE BOARD MEMBERS?

School board members are people just like you. They come from all walks of life. They possess knowledge and experience in health, social science, business, law, education, housing, and the trades. Some are retired. Most are parents who currently have or have had children who attend schools in the district.

On volunteer boards, most board members also are full-time employees at another job. It makes for quite a juggling act to manage a job, family and Board service. Board members do a tremendous amount of reading to stay abreast of educational issues. Material comes to them from the local, state, and national level.

Some boards have student members. These representatives are usually student government leaders who are selected from among their peers to serve in what is usually a non-voting capacity on the board. Students play a vital role in board business by providing a "front line" perspective on a variety of important issues.

Much of the Board member's time is spent in meetings. In addition to the regular session when the full Board meets, Board members also belong to various committees. In an effort to maintain good personal relations with the community, Board members also attend many community functions.

ATTITUDES OF BOARD MEMBERS

If there is a set of rules that distinguish Board members from others in the community, it would probably be their perspectives on the value of public education. While no two Board members or communities are alike, you will find School Board members everywhere are universally committed to:

- * their own field of work and a strong voluntary commitment to service on the School Board;
- * cultural diversity;
- * community/parent involvement in schools;
- * equity of education results;
- * full accountability by the public.

Remember these attributes. They're important in understanding how your own ideas and attitudes may be received by the Board.

DO'S and DON'T'S

DO

- * Come to the School Board meeting and talk to the Board.
- * Take a moment to write a letter to a School Board member expressing your thoughts.
- * Get others involved in schools issues;

there is power in numbers.

- * When an issue or problem arises, work through your child's school first. More and more decisions about your child will be made at the individual school. If you get no satisfaction from the school, come to the School Board.

- * Be an active participant in your child's education

DON'T

- * Don't stay away from your child's school.

- * Don't stay away from School Board meetings. Knowing what policies are

being developed and how they will affect your child, school, and community is critically important.

- * Don't forget that your voice can make a positive difference in your children's education.

* Sections of this chapter were adapted from *Becoming a Better Board Member: A Guide to Effective School Board Service*. National School Boards Association, 1982.

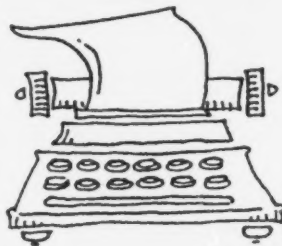
Armita Hicks McArthur is a parent, wife, teacher, community activist, and member of the Baltimore Board of School Commissioners.



YOUR SCHOOL SECRETARY

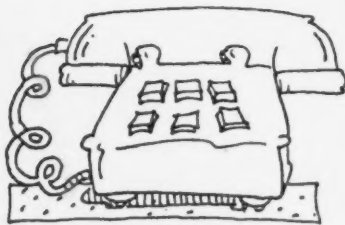
Phyllis Gosnell

The first person that most of the outside world encounters in the initial contact with a school comes in the form of a secretary, a very crucial ingredient in any school's successful operation. To fully understand just who a school secretary is and what she does, it would be helpful for you to know a bit about her duties -- those written in the formal job description as well as those unspoken, and often unrecognized, special situations that make up her work day.



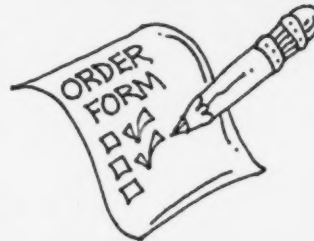
Many people envision a secretary as a typist, a stenographer, a word processor, a filer, a receptionist, and a message taker.

For the school secretary however, the job goes much, much further. In addition to the usual array of duties that one would expect, the job involves many additional responsibilities.



For example, there are student and faculty records to maintain, changes of address and transfer requests to process, along with schedule changes and grade changes to enter on the computer. There are telephone messages to take, not only for the principal, but also from parents for students and from friends and family for faculty members -- who often think of the school secretary as their

own personal employee. This alone can be quite overwhelming, considering that some urban schools have one secretary for 500 students, 2 administrators, and 40 staff



There are lunch tickets and transportation tickets to record and distribute. There are office supplies and textbooks and equipment to order, catalog, and distribute; school funds to be accounted for and secured; attendance to be taken; payrolls to be completed; substitute teachers to be called; student handbooks to be typed and distributed; mail to be opened and routed; daily bulletins; parent newsletters; building use permits; overtime authorizations; PTA and faculty meetings ... I think you've got the picture!

Now to all of the above duties add the *unwritten*, unspoken, but essential contributions of our school secretary, and the picture will be pretty much complete. At the elementary school, she routinely comforts the sick child and disciplines the naughty one. She daily dispenses band-aids and tissues and sympathy for the wounded, hugs and kisses and encouragement for the shy and frightened, admonishments for the mischievous,



and kindness and understanding for the unhappy and bewildered. In other words, she treats her charges in much the same way that she would her own children.

In the upper grades, the same activities occur, although on a more intense and complicated level. She is a friend and confidant to students needing an understanding ear, help with a problem (academic or personal), an appointment with the principal, counselor, or school nurse, even carfare home or a quarter for an emergency phone call. Our school secretary is there for all.

Despite all these demands on her skills, the school secretary, as a rule, would *never* trade her job for a central office position--how unexciting and mundane, how predictable!! She has often been in the same school for years, sometimes since the very first opening day when everything was brand new and squeaky clean. She has seen principals, students, faculty members, and support staff come and go, and has somehow managed to survive the good times and the bad. There are more than a few instances when the school secretary is considered by the community to be practically an institution, often being the only personal contact that some parents and students ever have with the school's administration.

As with all jobs, though, there are times when the school secretary feels (and sometimes even righteously threatens) that she would give anything to be anywhere else. There have been



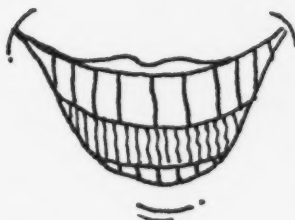
occasions, for example, when the school secretary has risen from a warm bed on a snowy morning and struggled through thigh-high snow drifts to get to school only to discover that she's the only one who bothered to get up at all. There are 100 degree summer days in *unairconditioned* offices, when everyone else gets to go home early. There are times when a 250-lb. male teacher sends a hulking six-foot-five-inch teenage trouble-maker to the office to be disciplined by a 105-lb. secretary without bothering to find out if the principal is around to take care of the matter. There are many occasions when enraged parents take out all their anger and frustration on the school secretary because they haven't been able to reach the teacher or principal at the exact moment that they call the office. There are times when the amount of a teacher's paycheck is wrong, or a student's health record is lost, or the third floor lavatory toilets are stopped up and flowing over and the custodian has disappeared, or ten people come to the office at the same time without appointments (all demanding immediate attention), or the P.A. malfunctions and the change of class bell rings off schedule, or fifteen teachers call in sick on the same day, and all the regular substitutes are sick too. These are not exaggerations.

Ideally, all of these adversities and more are met with calm, cool courage, an optimistic outlook, and an expedient resolution. But let's be realistic, even the best school secretary is *sometimes* overwhelmed. The smile fades, the lips quiver, the palms become damp, the teeth grind, the head pounds, the voice becomes edged with strain, the temper flares, and patience flies out the window, sometimes

along with good sense and manners. For all of us, at one time or another, some days are simply not good days.

Now I'm not saying that a school secretary, as described here, will be found in all of our schools. As in every walk of life, there are those of us who are great at what we do, those who are good, those who don't quite make the grade, and, unfortunately, those who are just plain awful! But overall, the school secretary knows that she is a professional employee, and she takes immense pride in doing the best job possible under any given circumstance. She is really concerned about the students in her school. She wants the best for them. Often the children live in the same community where she lives; they are her neighbors. She knows first-hand the good things and bad things that are a part of their home and school environment. She is just as proud of their successes and as sorry for their failures as any of the teachers and administrators in her school.

HOW TO KEEP US HAPPY



While we all know that she is worth far more money than she will ever be paid, incredibly, the school

secretary derives a lot of personal satisfaction and happiness in knowing that her capabilities and talents are recognized and appreciated. She feels especially gratified when her opinions, suggestions, and concerns are accepted and included in the determination of her school's operational procedures.

Whatever else her job calls for, the school secretary must know that she is trusted by the school community to perform all of her duties conscientiously and efficiently. And by knowing that she is a trusted and valued employee, she, in turn, will respond with that extra effort and enthusiasm that exemplifies the school secretary. So the next time you have occasion to visit or call the school, take special note of the first person that you're most likely to hear on the other end of the phone or meet in the office. If you understand her responsibilities, respect and recognize her place in the make-up of a school, you will more than likely be on the receiving end of a whole lot of enthusiastic and supportive assistance from your school secretary -- a very special and vital ingredient in any school and school system.

Ms. Gosnell is a secretary for the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Baltimore City Public Schools.

TEACHER & SCHOOL EMPLOYEE UNIONS

Marilyn Hunter

When we think about the people who work in our schools, we usually focus on that part of their work life we see. We are not usually aware of the challenges and issues that they face with their supervisor or co-workers. We may not know if they have been injured on the job and need compensation. They don't share with us their families' financial or health concerns. If they think they have been discriminated against or think their rights have been violated, they don't turn to the parents and the community for help.

To resolve these issues, school employees usually turn to their *unions*. Unions have staff to counsel and advocate for their members. Union members

Employee organizations have various names: "unions," "associations," "federations," etc. They are organized on different levels, just like many parent and community organizations. The school or work site has a union/association representative and/or committee. Affiliates are organized at the local, state or regional and national levels.

trained to help solve problems represent the organization at each work site. Unions bargain for legal contracts to protect certain employee rights. As part of the negotiation process, and subject to state legislation, contracts set wages, hours,

rights to sick leave and other leaves, transfer and recall rights, grievance and evaluation procedures.

Although you may not have been aware of them, these things are important to the people who work in your schools. The right to organize means that employees can deal with the organized power of their employers as a group, not alone as individuals. This is a vital part of our democratic system.

Bargaining a contract and resolving grievances with an employer are primary jobs of any union. School employee unions also provide other services to their members and to schools. If you know about these services and understand the role the union plays in school life, you can benefit from the dedication, strength and experience of the unions that represent the school employees in your community.

ADDING SPICE TO YOUR SCHOOL- COMMUNITY RECIPE

Teachers unions and unions of other school employees are advocates for education. They can add some vital ingredients to any recipe for school/community activity. Specifically, they can contribute:

- * an important perspective on school life
- * expertise on school-related issues

- * organizing skills and talents
- * special programs and resources
- * connections to influential persons and organizations and, in some school systems,
- * legally negotiated improvements in the school work/learning environment.

A good working relationship with your school employees' organizations can spice up your recipe for success.

UNION PERSPECTIVES

Teachers and teacher assistants experience the reality of the classroom every day. Custodians and maintenance workers know school buildings inside and out. Secretaries, clerks, cafeteria workers and bus drivers are experts in what they do. These school team members will be the ones responsible for carrying out changes in your school. There's no one better to help analyze problems, recommend solutions and evaluate proposals.

School employees feel strongly about their jobs and about helping children learn. Many are reluctant to talk publicly about school problems. They are, after all, trained to make the best of difficult situations. Some may also feel threatened with retaliation if they speak out as individuals.

This is why, when school employees want to make a difference, they often work through their unions. Surveys about school conditions, public testimony and organized protests are some of the ways unions can bring problems to light and

make needed changes.

UNION EXPERTISE

School employee unions want their members to understand issues that affect their school life and their jobs. They concentrate on issues of instruction and professional development for teachers and teacher assistants. They research and develop training programs on topics such as instructional methods, curriculum, interpersonal relations, multi-cultural education, human and civil rights, discipline and classroom management, conferencing skills, education reform, shared decision-making, political action, school health and safety, asbestos and indoor air quality, dispensing medicine and many more.

Local, state and national school employee unions are among the strongest and most informed voices in support of public education and reform. Your school/community recipe might benefit from a pinch (or a pound!) of their special knowledge.



UNION ORGANIZING SKILLS

Union staff and leaders are often skilled organizers. A school employee union can be a source of special talent in such areas as facilitating group meetings, problem solving, team building, newsletter publication, media and public relations. School employees' skills in these areas might be just the ingredient you need.

UNION SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL PROGRAMS

School employee unions provide financial and other support to local affiliates and to members for school improvement projects. At the state level, many unions provide grants to their local affiliates for efforts in school budget review and analysis, instruction and professional development, community outreach projects and minority leadership training. Some associations also train members in grant writing so they can tap into other resources.

Do projects in your school(s) involve union members? Do they focus on concerns your organizations share? If so, ask for union support.

UNION CONNECTIONS

School employee unions can help enhance your information systems and increase your impact. Schools with concerns like yours may want to learn about your successes. They may have developed approaches you can learn from. Other labor organizations in your community may be interested in contributing to school projects.

The legislative process and your elected officials directly affect your schools in many ways. School employee unions maintain contact with legislators and often have education lobbyists on staff. They publish newsletters and magazines that talk about school projects and concerns. Their connections may add some clout to your efforts.

UNIONS AND THE LEGAL RIGHT TO BARGAIN

Collective bargaining laws give unions the right to put issues on the bargaining table. Employers and employees must hold discussions in good faith to reach negotiated agreements. Where the law allows, school employee unions can use the bargaining process to advocate effectively for improving schools.

School employees would like to use collective bargaining to address issues such as class size, adequate text books, equipment and supplies, needed special programs, safety of school buildings and other critical matters. Where they can, both they and the students win.

In some states, public employees cannot bargain collectively at all. In most other states, the scope of bargaining is very limited. School employees in these states can only bargain for wages, benefits and narrowly defined "work conditions," i.e., hours, leave, transfers, grievance and evaluation procedures.

Schools can be stronger when parents and the community understand and support school employees' concerns at the bargaining table. The gains made there

can help public schools attract and retain dedicated professional and support staff.

AGREEING TO DISAGREE

Like people with different perspectives, sometimes organizations must agree to disagree. Sometimes, for example, the teachers union will have a different point of view than will the school parent organization.

Yet, even when there is disagreement, the basic rights of the organizations or individuals involved must be respected. Don't let disagreements over one issue sour your relationship.

For example, you may not like a certain union protest action. Teachers and other school employees don't take public protests lightly, either. It is, however, their right to raise their concerns forcefully if they feel compelled to do so.

Policies and procedures are set by the school administration and the school board, or are negotiated with the union as part of their contract. Some employee rights also are guaranteed by law. Administrators must take the time and effort to handle problems accordingly. The union works to see that they are enforced fairly.

The *working* conditions of the members of school employee unions are the *learning* conditions of the young people in your community. We can all agree the job of education -- and the fight to improve it -- must be carried out in an atmosphere of mutual respect and mutual support. That has been the starting point of every successful effort in the long history of

collaboration between school employees, their unions, parents and the community on behalf of America's young people.

BUTTON PUSHERS- THE DO'S AND DON'TS

DO make contact if you haven't already. Talk over issues that concern you with a representative of the union(s) involved. At your local school, this will be an association or union representative. If your school has a faculty advisory committee, you may want to speak to its chairperson. Find out how you can support your staff. Ask them to support you.

DON'T have unrealistic expectations. Many and sometimes conflicting demands are made on unions and union leaders. Members have pressing concerns. The economy fluctuates. The political situation changes constantly. The better you understand the issues and individuals involved, the more realistic and effective you will be.

DO try to understand when unions take public positions that differ from yours. From the employer or business perspective, employee and union rights may just seem like an obstacle. In reality these rights are basic to all Americans. Protecting people's rights is a part of our challenge in developing solutions that will work.

At the same time, **DON'T** forget that most issues have at least two sides! After you've heard the administration or the school board's viewpoint, find out how school employees and their unions see it.

The result of your efforts in

communication can be to win well-informed, well-positioned and powerful allies in advocating for our schools.

Marilyn Hunter is a parent, veteran teacher activist, and an organizer for the Maryland State Teachers Association.

VOLUNTEERS

Barbara Pritchard Johnson

VOLUNTEERS -- those who care so much about helping others and making their community better that they offer their services free of charge. Now that's a deal you can't refuse!

According to a 1987-88 survey conducted by the Independent Sector, a non-profit group, over 80 million adults volunteer each year in the United States. That translates to 19.5 billion hours of work and a donation of over 150 billion dollars worth of services.

In a time of decreasing budgets and increasing need, volunteers can be one of your greatest resources. Incorporating a volunteer component into your school and community programs will, at the very least, enhance the services that you provide. If the volunteer program is well planned and implemented, you can dramatically increase the success of your program.

PLAN, PLAN, PLAN

Volunteers can be used in a million different ways. You will want to determine what role your volunteers should fill. Do you need help with school-based management planning, or classroom helpers? Do you want help with the planning and execution of a one-time special project -- a conference, for instance? Do you want a docent program to be established, or participants for an

existing program? Do you want mentors? Do you want on-going clerical help? You might even want a volunteer to help establish your volunteer program.

Planning for the kind of help you're seeking will result in a volunteer component of greater benefit to you.

A 1988 Gallup Survey reported that people volunteered an average of four to seven hours per week. This is an extraordinary amount considering that volunteers are usually managing a family, holding down a full-time job, and still want to eat and sleep! Try to make your requirements as flexible as possible. Don't ask one person to volunteer nine hours per week - ask three people to volunteer three hours per week.

Writing volunteer job descriptions, and balancing the kind of functions you wish the volunteer to fill with a reasonable time commitment, should be a part of the planning. The less onerous the time commitment, the more response you will get, and the longer you will retain your volunteers.

Prepare an orientation packet to be handed out to the volunteers. It should describe what your organization does, what its purpose is, and how their volunteer time will benefit clients (i.e., students, teachers, etc.). Include their volunteer job description and their volunteer time

commitment expectations. If you need them to come once a week on a regularly scheduled basis, tell them. Also tell them if you want them on call for special projects or when you're on overload.

RECRUITMENT

GREAT! You know what you want your volunteers to do. **NOW**, how do you get volunteers in your door? Recruitment is the next step. **JUST ADVERTISE!**

- * Local radio and television stations will provide free public service announcements as part of their community contribution. Their community service directors will assist you in writing a short, to-the-point appeal to volunteers.

- * Many local newspapers have a free "Volunteers Needed" column.

- * United Way of Central Maryland publishes a "Volunteer Directory" that will advertise your program.

- * More and more local corporations are interested in volunteerism and will promote volunteer opportunities in their company newsletters or will post your need on their bulletin boards. Contact their Human Resources department.

- * Churches and synagogues will also help you advertise for volunteers.

TRAINING AND MOTIVATION

OKAY, your plan is completed, you've advertised, and now you have volunteers walking through your door. Handing them their orientation packet and leaving them

to their own devices will not do.

Writing volunteer job descriptions and balancing the kind of functions you wish the volunteer to fill with a reasonable time commitment, should be a part of the planning.

Training is the key. People will enjoy much more what they understand. Put yourself in their shoes. What would you like to know if you just walked into a building to face people you don't know, to do something you've never done before? If you take some time showing them around your school and introducing them to others, then the volunteer will immediately feel more comfortable. Take some time to explain the orientation packet -- emphasizing how much their help will mean to your students and teachers. Agreeing on the job description and time expectations, and answering any questions, will avoid misunderstandings later.

Volunteers are a diverse group. They come in all shapes, sizes, and skill levels. It is extremely important to determine what "hands-on" training your volunteers need. If, for instance, you are running a school-based mentoring program, and you want the volunteer to work directly "one-on-one" with a child, discuss the mentoring process, what the volunteer should expect, and what might be done to handle any problems that they might be encountered. If, for instance, you want volunteers to help you answer a constantly ringing phone, familiarize them with your phone system - how the phone "hold" buttons work, what questions might be asked, and how to

answer them.

People are always willing to help, but they like to understand what their tasks are and how you want them done.

THANK YOUR VOLUNTEERS

When you think about the amount of discretionary time people have in today's world, it is truly amazing that they are willing to donate that time to others. And of all the places in the world to donate their time, your volunteers have chosen your school. WOW! How can you thank them?

- * Say **THANK YOU** often.
- * Little things mean a lot. Learn their names. Say "Hi!" when they come in. Smile.
- * Keep the volunteers abreast of what your school is doing, so they can feel a part of the team.
- * Actively listen to what they have to say.
- * Provide parking if possible. The less cost to the volunteer for volunteering, the better.
- * Hold a thank-you party or picnic.
- * Send a little note for a job well done.
- * Mention volunteers by name in your newsletter.
- * Declare a "Volunteer of the Month."

The list could go on forever. Basically, your volunteers are there because they

want to be == not because they have to be. If you truly appreciate your volunteers and make them feel comfortable and part of the team, then your volunteer program will flourish == and so will your school and community.

*...people are always willing to help,
but they like to understand what
their tasks are and how you want
them done.*

DO'S AND DON'TS

DO

- * consider using volunteers. They are a wonderful resource.
- * remember that your volunteers are **FREELY** giving their valuable discretionary time to you, so take time to train them.
- * thank your volunteers whenever possible.

DON'T

- * recruit your volunteers until you know how you're going to use them. No one wants to waste his time.
- * be condescending. Your volunteers may not fully understand the workings of your organization, or your client population, but that does not make them inferior. Just take the time to educate them and see what valuable assets they will become.

Barbara Johnson is the 1990-91 President of the Junior League of Baltimore, Inc. The Junior League of Baltimore is a women's volunteer community service organization.

SECTION B
Recipes for Success:

Activities to Suit All Appetites

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS:

An Introduction

Alfred de la Cuesta

WHY DO COMMUNITY SERVICE?

Community service has long been part of our national heritage. Institutions such as the *United Way*, *Boy and Girl Scouts*, *VISTA* and the *Peace Corps* are all shining examples of this nation's commitment to serving the needy.

Community service is a powerful tool in educating our youth also because it provides the means to meet many of their developmental needs. Gayle Dorman from the Center for Adolescent Education has identified the following developmental needs in adolescents:

1. diversity in their activities and in the people with whom they come in contact;
2. the opportunity for self-expression and self-reflection;
3. meaningful participation in their community;
4. social interaction with peers and adults;
5. active learning that offers hands-on experience;
6. a sense of competence and achievement;
7. a sense of structure and clear limits.

Community service learning meets these

needs by involving youth and giving them a real stake in the community. Service helps children gain a sense of responsibility and self worth. It also allows youths the opportunity to build their skills in cooperation, decision making, critical thinking, problem solving and planning. Students are able to make the connection between their everyday and academic lives.

During service, young people are exposed to a variety of role models. They learn to interact with a variety of people and practice adult-like behaviors. Additionally, the youngsters become sensitive to the needs of others and are less "me" centered. Moreover, students in service programs are exposed to different career opportunities and responsibilities.

Community service is also one of the most powerful ways to motivate youths and instill in them societal values. It gives the youngsters a chance to work cooperatively in ways that truly matter. By meeting real needs, young people gain a sense of competence and achievement.

In recent years, there have been "shocking" stories of eight year olds arrested for selling cocaine. Many believe that it is the financial incentive that leads children down this path to the underworld of crime. But the real lure, I believe, lies in being seen by the adults in their neighborhoods as valuable commodities. These children suddenly have *something*

that adults want desperately.

Community service works in similar ways. It offers a group, yearning for recognition, an opportunity to matter to adults. It is time that we learn that

YOUTHS ARE VALUABLE ASSETS!

Ok, ok! You're convinced. You want to get your youngsters involved in community service learning. But where do you begin? The National Society for Internships and Experiential Education is an organization dedicated to service learning. They have outlined ten essential ingredients for a successful service program which they term *Principles of Good Practice*.

An effective and sustained program:

1. engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good;
2. provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their service experience;
3. articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved;
4. allows for those with needs to define those needs;
5. clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved;
6. matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances;
7. expects genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment;

8. includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals;

9. insures that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interest of all involved;

10. is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations.

These ingredients are all important, but it is not always possible to include everyone of them in your particular plan or situation. However, if you strive to include as many as possible, you will end up with a strong and worthwhile program. With these precepts in mind, it is possible to address many of the most frequently asked questions.

☒ **HOW DO I CHOOSE A SERVICE SITE?**

Choosing a service site requires two steps. First, you must do a little soul searching and then you need to engage in some site searching.

SOUL SEARCHING

In order to locate a site, you must first decide which populations you want your students to serve, and understand why you are choosing that particular group.

Many people focus their projects on groups they already serve, and with whom they feel most comfortable. This is a

natural first step, because many of us have a charity that we would like to see supported by others committed to help.



However, this "ideal solution" does not always pan out because of logistical problems such as transportation to the site, student interest (or lack thereof), and scheduling.

It is also important not to stringently adhere to any one particular service population before knowing whether it arouses the youths' interest. Likewise, do not discount a population that may not be your first choice or may seem too difficult to you if it attracts the students' attention.

Perhaps the best way to identify a service site is to involve as many others as possible. Recruit other staff members, community folks, and parents and, in particular, involve the students who would perform the service.

There remain difficult questions to answer.

♦ **Will students engage in group or individual service?**

Most often the key points to consider are (a) transportation and (b) developmental stage of the students.

Transporting a group may require a bus if the service site is not within walking distance. This could turn out to be a costly, although not insurmountable hurdle, especially if parents and

administrators are committed to the idea of service. However, getting individual students who do not themselves drive to service sites can be equally troublesome.

A more important consideration is what type of experience (group or individual) the students are capable of handling. In general, younger students and students without previous service experience tend to do better in group activities, or at least in pairs. There is "perceived" safety in numbers which allows the students to gradually become accustomed to the experience and become more adventurous with time.

♦ **Will service occur during or after school?**

The answer to this question will depend in large part on the level of commitment your school has made to community service and service/experiential learning. As you will see, this question is inextricably linked with the next question below.

It is important to point out that the initial willingness of students to volunteer seems to be positively linked with a service model calling for "co-curricular participation." In other words (sit down for this), the kids do it at first to get out of school.

There are still other advantages to having service during the school day, in part because it allows students to see the connection between school and the "real" world.

♦ **Will the experience be infused into the curriculum, or will it be offered as an**

independent experience?

This question and the one above almost must be answered in tandem. Although it is quite possible to have an after-school service model that infuses service learning into the regular curriculum, it may make better sense to use class time to take full advantage of the experience as a teaching tool.

However advantageous, it is not necessary to use service to reinforce learning in particular classes. Community service offers a great deal of learning in various areas -- from values education to career awareness to critical thinking and even self-concept formation. As such, service courses could be offered as an elective or even an independent study.

♦ With what regularity should students serve?

Ask yourself which would achieve the most profound change, a person doing a walk-a-thon one day, or a person going every week to work with the mentally retarded for three years in a row. The greater the regularity, the greater the impact and the longer-lasting the effects on the students.

♦ How long should each service activity last?

The answer to this is both simple and complex. Simple because it should be as long as it needs to be to provide a real service. Complex because there are the realities of time constraints under which the school and the service site must operate. The best advice here is to try to maximize the time allotted, but expect that it to be less than what you would hope for.

♦ For what length of time will the service

experience be offered (a semester, a year, etc.)?

In a study that I am helping to conduct with a local university, I have found that community service has the greatest impact on students' psycho-social and academic development only after a year and a half of being in service. Other studies have found extremely modest effects after eight weeks and encourage longer exposure. In general, the longer the exposure to service, the greater the benefit and learning that occurs for all involved.

SOLE SEARCHING

Now the foot work begins! Start by asking which groups in your community need help. This process of selection can be an extremely effective values education activity because it requires that everyone investigate and present their reasons for suggesting any one particular group in need.

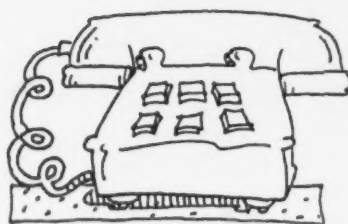
Ask the students to survey the school, parents, community or local institutions (i.e. nursing homes, soup kitchens, day care centers). Check neighborhood and local newspapers for ideas.

After identifying a few choices, it is time to start calling and visiting these organizations. Again, the selection process can be as educational as the program itself. Students can and should be involved if at all possible. Remember that four or more feet are better than two.

☒ WHO DO I CONTACT?

After choosing a service site, you must get

permission to conduct your project. This may be frustrating at times because many institutions are cautious about who comes in to



help. Of greatest concern to the institutions is the amount of supervision which the students have from **YOU**. Your chances of getting in will increase a thousand fold if you provide the adult supervision for the students.

The first step is to contact the organization's "CEO" (Chief Executive Officer) or administrator. Recruiting his/her interest and help is essential in ensuring the project's success. Explain the program you have in mind; at this point it can still be in the idea stage. Emphasize that the organization will have input in forming the project. Most importantly, present how this project benefits the CEO and his institution. This requires that you and your group do a little homework on the organization and its mission.

The CEO will likely refer you to a subordinate, but his initial involvement will smooth the way for your projects.

☒ **HOW DO I DESIGN A GOOD PROGRAM?**

There are many ways to form a program. Perhaps the easiest is to adopt an already established model. There may be a training cost depending on the model you choose, but the benefit of having a proven program and experts to guide you quite often offsets the expense.

There are a number of resources available. Some State Department of Education offices or local school districts provide support for high school service programs. They can provide teacher training, and may be of assistance in locating service sites.

If you are inclined to develop your own model, a useful resource, which is the current "Bible" of service learning, is the three volume set, edited by Jane C. Kendall, entitled *Combining Service and Learning: A resource Book for Community and Public Service*. The series is published by the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education (NSIEE) and can be ordered by calling (919) 787-3263. The books discuss the best practices and highlight theory and research in the community service field.

There are several essential components that you can use as general guidelines to developing a service project that maximizes student learning.

♦ **School and staff commitment** It is essential to have the principal's commitment to the project. It is also important that the leader have great energy and an absolute belief in service as a vehicle for learning and growth.

♦ **Structure** The project should be very well structured and conceived before the students begin the actual work. Loosely arranged programs are destined to fail. Take the time to plan and think all ideas through in fine detail. Devise alternate plans in case something goes wrong. It can be useful to include the students in the planning so that they have input and are intimately familiar with the project's

goals and objectives. A series of contacts outlining the responsibilities that the school, the students, the service site and the leader have are very useful and appropriate.

♦ **Meaningfulness** Another advantage of involving the students is to insure the activities are meaningful and allow them to *see* the impact they are having.

♦ **Combining service and learning** Community service should be used as a springboard for learning and not necessarily as an end in and of itself. As discussed at the opening of this chapter, service has implications in the learning of citizenship, critical thinking, moral development and social responsibility. But service may also be used to reinforce more basic academics such as English, reading, math, social studies, etc.

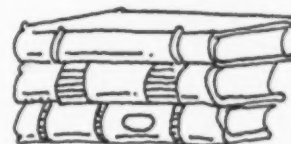
Imagine the possibilities of infusing the service experience into the core curriculum. Students going to a rehabilitation center can learn to write persuasive essays by composing letters to the Governor asking him to focus attention on the plight of the physically and mentally disabled. A mathematics class can put on a fund raiser for the homeless shelter they visit. Youngsters frequenting nursing homes could learn, firsthand, what World War II was like, from those who lived through it. The sky's the limit!

♦ **Orientation** Orient and sensitize students to the needs of the population they will serve and to the concept of service itself. Careful planning and coordination will pay off in spades. Have a staff member from the service site help

you in your presentation. You may want to have the students get a tour of the facility before actually beginning service. Most of all, have the students discuss their expectations and trepidations openly and honestly. If they have fears, acknowledge them and confirm that it is natural and that in time their anxieties will be relieved.

♦ **Journals**

Having the students keep journals may be the single most frustrating thing you ever attempt



in your life. Do it! It is an invaluable both as a tool to encourage discussions and as a way for the students to understand the value of what they have done at the end of their service.

Recently, I graduated a group of students who had done service with me for the past three years. These adolescents, who had gone to nursing homes every week during those three years, resisted writing in their journals so vehemently that you might have thought I was passing a death sentence on them.

During our last session together, one student, who had been particularly set against journal writing, realized that he had a collection of his thoughts since he was eleven. Everyone in the room began leafing spontaneously through their journal, stuck by the same realization. There was laughter throughout as the students marveled at their *innocent* view of the world three years ago. It became clear that it was worth all of the battles to have the students arrive at this point.

♦ **Reflection** Perhaps the single most important component of service learning is reflection. In order to accomplish the learning discussed above, there must be ample time allotted for participants to evaluate the service experience. It is through reflective discussions that service moves from a simple *pat-on-the-back* experience to a deeper one which effects moral and social development. Reflection spurs intellectual and creative growth by engaging and teaching participants to critically assess their experiences in the broader context of the world. It is important to maintain reflection throughout the entire course of the service experience.

Often, this time may be used to hold training related to issues arising from the reflective process. For example, you might devise a discussion session which teaches students about the illnesses and afflictions of old age and separates the myths from the realities.

♦ **Acknowledgement and Rewards** It is important that student progress and success be acknowledged. Incentives are extremely important in keeping the students motivated, especially during the early stages of service before the experience becomes intrinsically rewarding. Equally important is awarding students for their efforts and caring. It is always a good idea to have an awards ceremony to recognize their achievements.



Holding an end-of-service celebration rewards students for their participation, helps develop a sense of community, and increases their stature in

the school.

☒ **WHAT ABOUT COSTS AND TRANSPORTATION?**

Service programs are relatively inexpensive. Perhaps the greatest cost you will face is transportation. This need not frighten or discourage you. There are solutions, but all of them require you to build support within your community for the project.

1. Find out if the service site would pay for transportation or split costs with you.
2. Have the school system either donate the buses for your program or help negotiate a reduce rate with the bus company.
3. Many schools have a business sponsor. This is an ideal way to give them a role in helping the school. Another idea is to contact the community businesses and have them sponsor your project as they would a little league team. You might even include t-shirts with the businesses logo on the back.
4. Recruiting parent support could pay off in this instance by having them pay for their child's transportation. If feasible, they could car pool the students to the service site. This would give them the opportunity to get involved and see their children in action.

☒ **HOW DO I MOTIVATE THESE YOUTH TO WANT TO DO SERVICE?**

It's easier than you think! Often we do not give our young people enough credit. My experience has been that children jump at the chance to make a difference. The trick is getting them excited about your program. You need to have energy about the project, and you need to show the students that it will allow them to make a difference while having fun.

Here are some hints that may help.

- ◆ Get students to *see* and *experience* the problems suffered by others and how they could really help. This encourages empathy and avoids sympathy. You may, for instance, blindfold the students if they are to work with the blind, and have them try to perform tasks using their other senses.

- ◆ Be different! Do not make this just another classroom experience. Make activities active and participatory.

- ◆ Offer incentives.

- ◆ Do not deny the self-serving aspects of service. Students need to know that they are getting something out of the experience as well. It is useful to introduce the concept of *enlightened self-interest*.

- ◆ Show a lot of energy. Your excitement is contagious. The children look to you to gauge how they "should be feeling." If you are blasé about the project, they will reflect the same attitude.

- ◆ Allow students to make decisions and *mold* the program.

- ◆ Make the activities age appropriate.

Especially for younger students, the experience needs to be concrete, active and varied. Your program will quickly disintegrate if you are asking the children to perform beyond their capacity. That is not to say that they should not be challenged, but the challenge should be one they have a fair chance of meeting.

- ◆ Give constant feedback and updates on their progress. It is important for the students to know how they are doing and what they could be doing better.

☒ **WHAT IF SOMETHING HAPPENS? (LIABILITY AND SAFETY)**

This is perhaps the most frequently asked question. Everyone sees liability as the great stumbling block to doing service. However, there are thousands of service programs and projects operating for years with NO LIABILITY INSURANCE, and they have never experienced any problems.

If your program is well planned and supervised you really have little to worry about. It amazes me that we have sports programs in schools which regularly expose children to potential injury, and the question of liability never discourages these programs from being offered. Yet, there are countless times where would-be service leaders have shied away from offering a program because they felt liability was too great an issue.

That is not to say that safeguards should not be taken. In your program, consider the following.

- ◆ Obtaining parental consent and release

is very important.

♦ School insurance usually covers liability. Check it out!

♦ Most service sites usually have liability insurance for volunteers.

♦ Some state laws make it extremely difficult to sue volunteers for willful neglect. But check to make sure.

♦ If you are using a bus company, they have insurance to cover the students during their trip. Obtain and keep a copy.

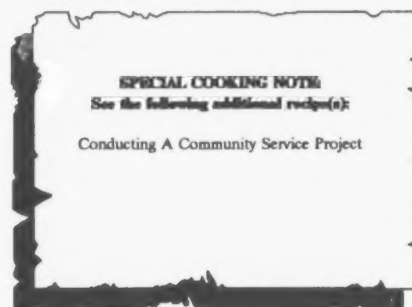
♦ No amount of insurance can substitute for good planning and supervision.

EVALUATING YOUR PROJECT

Evaluation is a four letter word to many people (especially bad spellers!), but it need not be. Think of it in terms of essential reflection about your project. It is ideal if you can distribute standard surveys to be completed by the students, the service site, those served, teachers and parents. The more the merrier, and the more accurate a picture that will emerge. You may want to do a more formal evaluation that would show results such as attitudinal changes, mastery over service information, attendance and even grades. Although such an evaluation may not be feasible for your project, it is always

impressive, especially if you want to secure funding. For this type of more elaborate evaluation, you may want to team up with a local university or garner the support of the central school administration.

Now you are prepared to embark upon what will probably be an incredible journey for you and for the youngsters. You will, more than likely, never see these children quite in the same way. They will surprise you. Keep in mind that service should be fun hard work. The students should feel they get as much out of the experience as they are giving. Most of all, be flexible, and listen to the students' feedback. Experiment with different approaches, and **HAVE FUN YOURSELF!**



Alfred A. de la Cuesta is the Executive Director of Magic Me, Inc., a youth service organization based in Baltimore, Maryland.

CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

Drew Carberry

In education and other youth services enterprises, the "win-win" situation is the most desirable. When everyone "wins" -- gains, progresses, and grows -- everybody is happy. **Community Service Projects** can result in gains for the community *and* gains for the youthful participants. The community sees improvement and the participants gain in the critical areas of self-esteem, self-worth, empowerment, and vision.

There are three kinds of community service activities that are easily replicated and bring positive results. These are (1) ongoing non-credit; (2) ongoing for-credit; and (3) ad-hoc event projects.

On-going non-credit community service is a continuing voluntary program in a specific area. National programs, such as *Magic Me*, or a soup kitchen volunteer program, are good examples. The on-going for-credit community service activity is for secondary school students who receive academic credit for work conducted within the school day.

This recipe will focus on the **Ad Hoc Event**, such as a beautification, restoration, or charity event. Ad hoc events can be conducted by a coordinator in a school, by a community organization, or by a parent group. They are designed to provide youth participants with a positive experience, as well as the benefits associated with community service.

The ad hoc event usually involves physical labor or action, such as planting, cleaning, or building. It is often connected to a "bigger picture." As a component of a larger plan, it may have a significance in the community that extends beyond the one day event. For example, the project may take the form of landscaping a park where playground equipment, pavilions, and benches are to be located later. It leaves a lasting, tangible structure in the community. The ad hoc event can also involve people, for example, nursing home residents or physically challenged children.

WHY COMMUNITY SERVICE?

Community service can be the vehicle that reaches "hard to reach" youngsters and turns them around into productive students and contributing citizens. Community service can provide students with a way of seeing the "big picture," expanding horizons beyond their own little worlds. Students learn about other realms of existence, gain mastery in an area of vocational interest, and bond with citizens and professionals in new and healthy ways. In addition, students can improve relationships with peers and fill idle hours with productive (respected) activities. And finally they can develop qualities and transfer those qualities and experiences into other areas of their lives, especially school and home.

HOW DO YOU ACTIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS?

Establishing a community service program in your school or community can be very beneficial if done in a proper manner. Your first step is to determine that it is something you genuinely believe will provide the benefits you expect for the youth you serve. Secondly, you must get the support and guidance from your leadership (principal, community association board, etc.). Third, *enthusiasm, enthusiasm, enthusiasm!* There is nothing more contagious than enthusiasm. Be enthusiastic about your ideas, goals, and plans to everybody you touch, including students, parents, teachers, administrators, and area residents. Also, investigate what's already in place in your neighborhood on the community service front. Latch on, modify, replicate, or discard, and move on to the next possibility.

Sometimes, projects fall into your lap and other times you have to go looking for them. The ones that can fall into your lap are "Earth Day"- type celebrations that include plantings, beautification, and environmental ceremonies. Annual events such as Christmas and Thanksgiving food basket drives, gifts for underprivileged children (Santa Claus Anonymous), Walk-A-Thons, special olympics, and charity events all fall into this category. Brainstorm with others and list the events that happen in your community every year. You will probably find that there is something to keep your youths busy every month. In the months that are "dry", you can create an event.

"Walk-A-Thons" and similar events can

involve volunteering the traditional way by getting sponsors and walking, and that's OK. However, I often propose to organizers that my students act as staff, or "go-fers" who can carry out organizational level tasks and free up the organizers to oversee the progress of the event. Young people thoroughly appreciate the responsibility of being set slightly apart and elevated from the pack of other participants. They are generally welcomed by organizers as another set of hands or legs to get things done, especially in a one-day event where everyone -- and I do mean *everyone* -- tugs at the sleeve of the head organizer. For an organizer, it is a major relief to be able to hand off detail tasks and inquiries to a group of competent, energetic, enthusiastic youth.

In Baltimore, the annual Harborwalk to raise funds for the completion of a harbor promenade has used my students for the last two years as Event Staff. The "staff" has attended planning meetings where they listened and added comments to the planning effort. They prepared the walkway by spending two Saturdays prior to the event clearing debris and laying wood chips. On the day of the event, they were handed colorful "STAFF" shirts that set them apart from the walking participants.

Young people thoroughly appreciate the responsibility of being set slightly apart and elevated from the pack...

The distinctive shirt made them part of a group. They were then a resource for both organizers and participants. Experiences such as these allow youngsters to begin to

experience leadership. Depending on the youth population you serve, this may be the first time they have been handed "adult" responsibility. My experience is that they respond enthusiastically and perform with flying colors. Don't be surprised to see them incorporate that special event shirt into their rotating stock of clothes worn to school. I believe they frequently wear the "staff" shirt to remind them of a day that they felt great about themselves.

The events that fall into your lap, like the one just described, make it easy for a community service organizer. Other times, however, you have to go looking for events. You do that in the same way you secure any opportunity -- you keep your eyes and ears open for possibilities. Keep abreast of the news, and watch for what's happening in your community. One of the most successful community service projects I know came from a news item about a 150-year-old lighthouse that a local organization was going to pluck from the middle of the Chesapeake Bay and place on shore as the centerpiece of a new development. A phone call and



a few conversations later, my youngsters were involved in a complete rehabilitation project involving an historic landmark. We met, planned our involvement, scraped paint, pulled planks, shoveled guano, and hauled debris. We readied the once decrepit lighthouse to a point where contractors could come in and re-wire and modernize the structure for an office. Working with other volunteers (some of

whom were direct descendants of the first lighthouse keeper), we donated thousands of dollars worth of labor. We continue our involvement with this project in both voluntary and paid capacities. And all that from a news article and a phone call!

For those community service projects that you manufacture, you become the clearinghouse for getting things organized and done. Identify the project and secure the participating agencies. Using a copier, develop a letterhead that includes the logos of all involved agencies (after securing permission, of course). This technique develops its own head of steam and can be fun and rewarding. It is astounding how many organizations want to be connected to a quality community service project.

If a sponsoring agency can't accommodate your request for assistance, go to a third party. See if the local pizza parlor can make an in-kind contribution and maybe get a mention in a newspaper or TV news feature. Large corporations have offices that handle requests such as those on a daily basis (see other chapters in the *Cookbook*). Also, ask the major players in your community for help if the original agency doesn't have the wherewithal to provide. Remember, your primary concern is the experience that your youths will have. Meeting their needs will go a long way to insuring the success of the event. In our planning for a playground construction event, we agreed that students would dig twenty-two holes for playground apparatus posts. In a trial run, we determined that one hole was an enormous task taking a great deal of time and effort. We made a call to a local utility, and because of the community

value of the project, they sent a truck and crew that completed the task in a fraction of the time. This freed us to complete the original plan on schedule.

TIPS

■ Maintain and build a core student leadership group. Success begets success. Do not allow the core group to become elitist. And keep their tasks and planning fun, saving the drudgery for adults! When planning with students, always keep in mind that brief, focused meetings are better than rambling ones. Provide the students with light perks, such as free periods, snacks, or the use of your office or phone to plan.

■ **It's easier to ask forgiveness than get permission!** When planning an ad-hoc event, do just that-- PLAN! Don't check at every step of the way to get further go-ahead from superiors. Many administrators find it easier not to take risks on specific parts of the plan, but will accept the whole plan as a package. Once they see that a superb, thought-out plan has been presented, they will be more willing to let you move on with implementation.

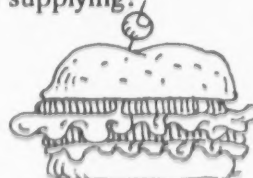
DETAILS

In my opinion, the success or failure of a community service activity hinges directly on the DETAILS. Anticipating every contingency is impossible, but in the careful planning process, "worst case scenarios" are brainstormed to see what could be anticipated to improve the event. In your planning, make a checklist of questions such as:

♦ Transportation How will the youths get there? Will they be picked up? Do they need bus tokens or money? Should there be a car pool? Is there a question of insurance liability? If so, is there an agency that can do that part for us?



♦ Food "An army travels on its stomach." There is no truer statement when it comes to teens and community service. Food can also be the magnet that will draw reticent kids to an event. Conversely, the *lack* of food will keep them away in droves! Who is supplying?



Will the kids like it? They prefer pizza, fast food and snacks. Is there a distinct period of time built into the event for eating? Is it sufficient?

♦ Weather-Is there a way to accomplish the task in foul weather? Is there a network in place to notify participants in the event of a cancellation or postponement?

"Where were you, Mr. Organizer? I stood out in the rain for two hours waiting for you!" Will this student volunteer again soon? I think not!

♦ Equipment Are tools or other equipment needed? How do the tools arrive at the site? How will the tools get back where they came from? How will the tools remain secure?

♦ Miscellaneous Are there any legal permits needed? Do we need parental

permission slips (always a good idea)? What is the ratio of adults to youth? Should we limit the number of youths? Stagger schedules? Who does clean-up? Are there rest rooms? Electrical outlets?

MORE TIPS

There is a real value to an ad-hoc event if there is some physical structure that will remain in place when the event is completed. An effective "sales technique" I use when encouraging volunteers is to tell them that when they are done, the results will be there for awhile. It could be a place where they could even bring **THEIR** children some far off day in the future and tell them, "I built that." Trees planted that bloom and grow, playgrounds that stand, and harbor promenades that continue to be used are good examples of permanent structures that are evidence of the effort expended by the participants.

Take your successes and build upon them. Tell the "no shows" on Monday that they "missed it." Show off the tee-shirts, the empty pizza boxes, the callouses, and the tired feet, and then open the door for their participation the next time.

As the adult responsible for a group of youngsters engaged in an unusual, non-traditional activity, using tools, in a foreign setting, interacting with other persons, etc., you **MUST** attend to the fact that these children are your charges and your responsibility. Focus on their activity, their safety, and their perspective. Be advocates for them if



there is a third party sponsor involved. Remember, you are trying to make this a positive experience. You may withhold your youngsters from any part of the activity or cease their involvement at any time that you reasonably think your goals are not being met. Sometimes, "no" is the right answer.

If youngsters are involved in physical labor using tools, use the traditional federal and state youth work laws as a reference for safety and appropriate practices. Be aware of such things as ladders, scaffolding, power tools, toxic substances, and the hours that youth are permitted to work. The young people will be enthusiastic and want to get involved in anything and everything. Use superior judgment and advance planning to reduce risk and make the project a success.

I was amazed at how responsive sponsoring agencies or groups are to the question, "Can we help you in some way?" There is usually some part of a project for which you can provide assistance and receive some perks for your kids. If an agency agrees to your participation, make requests during your planning meetings that will make the event a success for your students. "Can you provide lunch for us that day?"; "Can you provide a shuttle that will get us to the site?"; "Will we get a tee-shirt (or hat, badge, door prize, etc.)?" Only by asking will you receive. But be sure to negotiate carefully. Coming in with an inflexible list of demands during the honeymoon period can lead a sponsor to determine that you *and* your kids are more bother than you are worth.

NEVER, never use community service as a punishment for wrongdoing or for

infractions of school rules. A student should never be assigned to a community service project as a punitive measure. Do not allow your administration to connect, consciously or unconsciously, your program to any kind of disciplinary activity.

DO take photos of your students engaged in the activity. Fill bulletin boards and showcases with the photos and names of those who participated.

Never use community service as a punishment for wrongdoing or for infractions of school rules.

Contact the local media. They are usually on the lookout for creative, innovative features. Give them as much lead time as possible. Don't overlook neighborhood and community media resources, such as the community weekly, cable television, and public access TV. In our day and age, media coverage serves to validate the event. Don't overlook this with administrators, parents, or youngsters. It also never hurts to "prep" one or two student spokespersons who could provide a good "sound bite," stating the purpose and significance of the event.

There will be a few youngsters who will be turned on by the specifics of the project. If they provide any inkling that they would like to continue the service -- **jump on it!** Act as a liaison with the sponsoring agency. Contact someone there you know and connect him/her with the interested youth(s). The youths may stuff envelopes, plan next year's event, or get paid jobs or career training. This residual involvement

will benefit the youths and your program.

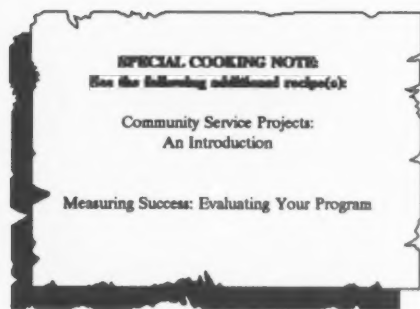
EVALUATION

Your successes with community service are often difficult to quantify. Often administrators and bureaucrats are concerned with numbers and percentages. "How many kids showed up?" They rarely take into account the level of change that can occur within one individual when he or she is involved in community service. Sometimes the change can be 180 degrees, or a change from a low level of participation to one of excitement and enthusiasm about something that now has new meaning. It is difficult to measure what was once inconceivable and is now believed to be within reach. These changes and improvements that take place within the students can't possibly show up in a report that says "x number of students participated" or "x percent of the students took part." Realistically, if 50% of the youths who said they were going to show up, actually show up -- it's a success.

True evaluation of community service programs is a longitudinal or long-term endeavor, measuring discrete changes in the behavior of participants over an extended period of time. Where data is required, you will probably be able to provide only cursory statistics on attendance and accomplishments

♦♦♦

Help make community service projects a "win-win" situation in your community. Establishing a tradition of service, developing a useful and important project, paying attention to details, and evaluating the effort, are the keys to success.



Drew Carberry is coordinator of Community Service programs for the Futures program at Southern High School in Baltimore.

ALUMNI INVOLVEMENT AND FUNDRAISING: Conducting a Reunion

Ellen Kahan Zager

What has given alumni the ability to do great things at our elementary school is that their early school experiences were some of the finest in their lives. Alumni have had an emotional commitment to the school that is hard to match.

Conducting a reunion can be not only fun but financially rewarding. Tapping the hearts of former students is a wonderful way to raise money. And the more emotional the ingredients, (for us, it was recalling common memories like punch ball, 3-cent milk, old neighborhood stories, "Remember the day John Kennedy was shot?" etc.), the easier the sell.

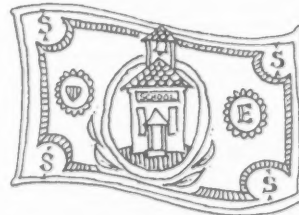
As in any activity affiliated with a school, the **principal** is your first ingredient. He/she is your beneficiary and your ally. Make sure that she is included in all planning. After all, she knows the system and can expedite the securing of the smallest detail (like extra trash cans) as well as any significant services that you will need from the bureaucracy.

You'll need to locate **alumni** who can serve on your planning committee. Try to find people with small egos; work by committee often gets bogged down with personal neuroses and those who donate their time hoping for recognition and possibly some monetary return in the long run. If you do not have an available

alumni list, a small ad in the local and neighborhood newspaper should help you find enough people to begin to plan the event. This method will also yield *interested* people.

Once you have established a working committee you will need to develop a comprehensive approach to the event.

SET YOUR FUNDRAISING GOAL



How much money do you want to net? Is it as important to have a large attendance as it is to make a lot of money? Is

this an exclusive event? The answers to the remaining questions are interrelated and will be affected by the choices you make regarding ticket price.

TYPE OF AFFAIR

Will your affair be fancy (expensive), casual, include offspring, etc.? Your **caterer** can help you determine the possibilities by discussing the type of food and the amount of money that you want to spend on the event.

HIRING A CATERER

After deciding what type of event and amount of money you want to net, consult with several caterers and make sure you receive competitive bids from each, based on the same information. *Don't attempt to "cook for the masses." You will be too busy worrying about the program to deal with food and food service.* Your caterer will handle it all -- they are paid to deal with the fine details of the event. They'll even help with table setups, cleanup, etc.

DECIDE THE DATE

Allow plenty of time to locate alumni and plan the event. We worked with a 9 month lead time and still found that there was not enough time to find the people we hadn't seen in 20-30 years.

SELECT A LOCATION

Our reunion took place at the school for several reasons:

- It was inexpensive.
- It held a lot of memories.
- It helped people understand the connection between the school that still exists and the community in which many of them no longer live (an important fund-raising strategy).

DETERMINE THE TICKET PRICE

Now you are ready to set the ticket price. This will be based, of course, on your expenses as discovered above, **plus** an amount to be donated to the school.

The amount of money you raise will depend on the ticket price, your total

expenses), and the number of people that you attract. Our reunion brought 600 alumni, friends and spouses to the school out of a total pool of 1,500 possible alumni. About half of the alumni brought spouses and friends. We also sold advertisements in a program book that yielded additional revenue. The bottom line is that there is no magic formula. You will need to balance your desire for the most revenue against setting the ticket price so high that no one will attend. Good luck!

To accomplish the many tasks involved in pulling off the reunion, you will want to encourage those people with specific talents and connections to step forward and assume leadership roles. *Never forget that alumni are a great source of resources!*

With the basic ingredients outlined above, you are now ready to bake! The basic tips listed below will produce the desired results:

LOCATING ALUMNI

Hard work, but very rewarding. Tracking down old buddies (when they remember you) can be more fun than the reunion itself. Even talking to their mothers and grandmothers, aunts, cousins, and in-laws is an adventure.

At first, we examined pupil registration cards located at the school. We found them to be an excellent resource -- **20 years ago!** There are better methods.

If you have start-up funds, advertise the reunion and have a consistent telephone number to call for information. Press releases with the proper follow-up also can

work to advertise the reunion and the fact that you are looking for former students of your school. Then, using members of your committee (preferably representing each year of graduation), hit the phone books.

■ Start with people you know.

■ Ask for a current address and phone number. Ask for information on siblings, former neighbors, friends, etc. who attended the school. This is the best way to develop your list.

■ If that doesn't work, try every surname in the book (unless of course it's Brown or Cohen). It takes HOURS but it's worth it. You'll usually hit a long-lost relative who will have a lead on your person.

■ Often, people will remember about a particular family, i.e., where they moved (locally, or to another city or country), who they married, etc. You'd be surprised how many people we found by calling Information in other cities.

■ Make sure that you have a committee member who will very generously file all of this data on a computer. You'll need it.

■ Include a list of "missing alums" in your invitation (see below). This is in the form of a sheet entitled...*Please help us find...*

INVITATIONS

Be creative. Have fun. *And find a company willing to donate printing services!* We were lucky to have connections at a local utility where our invitations were printed according to our specifications *pro bono*. We also had an alum with a major printing business who volunteered to print

anything we needed, including the program book (see below).

Your reply card should include space for name, address and phone number, as well as optional information such as family status, occupation, and favorite school memories.

ASKING FOR A DONATION

Your invitation will tell your audience that the reunion is a fundraising event. Therefore, use the school's tax-exempt status to your benefit by having checks made payable to the school, non-profit school foundation, or other entity so you can indicate that the contribution is tax-deductible. You should check with a tax advisor regarding the amount of the ticket price that is actually deductible.

You will want to give your alumni the opportunity on the invitation to donate additional funds (above the ticket price) or to buy a ticket or send a contribution even though they cannot attend. This effort was very successful for us.

THE MAILING

We wanted our invitations to be intriguing and important to the people receiving them. We therefore sent them hand-addressed by first-class mail. The envelope was brightly colored and contained the all familiar number of the school in big, bold red letters. If anything, the envelope got opened!

If you are in a budget crunch, you may want to consider bulk mailing and put your savings toward other expenses. The

post office can provide you with details.

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS

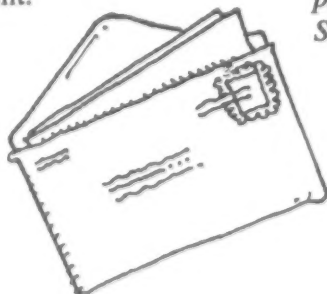
Do you want music? Decorations? Door Prizes? What kind? Your committee will enjoy the discussions created by these critical questions. What you do will be dictated by your money situation.

PERMITS

Be sure to work with your principal to secure all the permissions you will need to hold the reunion, especially if it's in a school building. Security, custodial, cafeteria, and other permits may have to be acquired. Many school districts do not permit alcohol in their buildings. Check it out carefully. Where possible, have the school or school district donate the services. After all, you're conducting a fund raiser for them!

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations events associated with the reunion will benefit the school. Often the news media, particularly television, will feature the reunion on the late night news. Press releases and follow-up calls to the TV station will help assure the desired result. Before the event, try to get a feature article in the community newspapers. This may serve to increase participation at the event.



THE AD BOOK

If you have the energy and the manpower, you will want to consider publishing a program book for your event that not only lists all alumni information (name, address, phone, occupation, family status, favorite memory, etc.), but also offers the opportunity to sell sponsorships and display ads to the community. Community organizations, neighborhood businesses, apartment complexes, and alumni themselves are excellent sources of additional revenue. The Book will also provide an opportunity to thank all those who made the reunion possible.

THANK YOU'S

It's essential to thank those who put themselves out for the event; committee people, people in high places who lend a hand, and all those who contribute to the event through in-kind services as well as with cash.

THE DIET

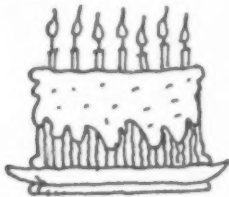
Committee people may want to shed those extra pounds before the big day. It's amazing how old everybody gets in 25 years!

Ellen Kahan Zager is immediate past president of the Cross Country Elementary School Foundation, Inc.

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

Cecilia Landers

Could your school benefit from a good dose of community relations, school pride, alumni involvement, or student recruitment? How about all four? If your answer is **YES!**, then the birthday party might be the perfect recipe for your school.



Our elementary school has served families in our community for over ninety years. During that time, many changes have occurred in the neighborhood, the city, and the school. We wanted the community at large to know that despite nearly a century of change, the school was able to provide a quality education and was worthy of community investment. The school's ninetieth continuous year of operation provided a perfect excuse to prove this. We decided to hold a big **BIRTHDAY PARTY!**

The following recipe focuses mainly on the varied types of activities that we held to celebrate the birthday. Use these activities as a guide; community and school traditions will influence the particular events that you will want to hold.

Whatever goals and activities you select, sound planning and evaluation will play important roles.

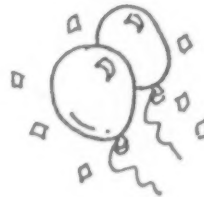
PLANNING

We gave ourselves six months to plan the

event. An Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from the school, the community, area businesses and services, and our local Public Education Fund was formed. The bulk of our strategy building was done in the first 2-3 months. How could the birthday party best *market* our school? Who would be involved? What supplies and materials were needed? What were the cost factors? How would success be measured?

Marketing was very important to us. We wanted to demonstrate that the school was still a viable alternative to other public and non-public schools in the area. We also wanted to attract the financial and resource support of the neighborhood's families and businesses. For this reason, our event was to have "something for everybody" with a particular eye toward the families of younger children. These would be our future students!

Don't be fooled into believing that the main purpose of the birthday party is to have fun. That was the second purpose!



Our main priorities, our goals, were to enhance community awareness of the school, develop financial support, and have the school viewed by younger parents as a viable educational alternative for their youngsters. Each of these priorities would be evaluated. So, while having fun, *always keep an eye on your goals.*

THE EVENT

Every birthday party is different. The following activities and special arrangements were deemed critical to the success of our event and meeting our goals:

The V.I.P. Reception

We planned a special V.I.P. reception for former and present staff and administration, city and school system officials, and business and community leaders. All businesses that donated items to the event were also invited.

This V.I.P. event preceded the general celebration by about 30 minutes, giving quality "network" time to the school and community leadership. The birthday party was catered by a local business and hosted by parent volunteers. Since much important business can get done at such a reception (especially if you are trying to call attention to certain issues or opportunities at the school that can be addressed by these leaders), it will be important to set the proper tone.

Alumni Awards and Recognition Ceremony

Alumni are the life blood of any school, especially if they still reside in the community. Contacting alumni was accomplished in many ways. A community resident contacted many of the older former students through the neighborhood church registry. Others were notified by parent volunteers who sent press releases to local newspapers and radio stations. Fliers were posted in neighborhood store windows.

Graduates were encouraged to send in memorabilia and written accounts of favorite school memories. The event featured a "Memory Lane" display, complete with pictures, report cards, and other items depicting the changing face of our community over the years. This display also provided interesting and important lessons and activities for current students.

Alumni were greeted by students and by parent volunteers. They were invited to sign their names in a registry according to the years they attended the school. With specially color-coded name tags, they were royally treated to tours of the school by parent volunteers.

The actual recognition ceremonies took place at the end of the party. The ceremony provided an ideal opportunity to include current students, and their organizations in the event, such as the school's girl scout troop. In keeping with our goals, it was important to show current students, their parents, and the community at-large that the school had produced alumni who made vital contributions to the community.

Prominent alumni spoke about their days at the school, and the groundwork that the school provided for their future education and careers. *Their remarks established the school as a vital community institution, with a history, a track record, and a level of integrity that could not be disputed. They provided the audience, particularly the parents of current and prospective students, with a sense of security about the soundness of the school's programs.*

The alumni segment of the birthday party ended with a cake cutting ceremony,

complete with school songs, balloons, and other party themes.

Food and Community Activities

The outdoor segment of the birthday party was focused on food, education, and fun. This effort fulfilled our goals of fundraising, community awareness, and presenting to parents a sense of educational integrity about the school.

Food was sold by neighborhood businesses. City agencies set up booths and provided information about their services. Children's activities included craft making, entertainment, and appearances by several local mascots. The police and fire department offered safety demonstrations and other activities. School information was prominently displayed. Taken together, these activities projected a very desirable image of the school in the community.

Recruitment

Perhaps the biggest activity was the opportunity for neighbors to greet one another and talk about the school. *In this sense, the birthday party was actually a big recruitment event.* The real work was accomplished very quietly -- by our current parents and teachers -- who made a big impression on the younger families by displaying confidence, "esprit de corps," knowledge about the school's programs, and a caring attitude toward youngsters.

It is very important to remember that everything that parents, administrators, teachers and other volunteers say and do will be closely observed by these prospective parents, and will have a lasting

impact on the school's image in the community. Therefore, if recruitment is a goal of your event, use care in selecting your top representatives.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Another key element of the birthday party was publicity and public relations. For the people in attendance, the presence of T.V. cameras and news reporters added to the perceived importance of the school. For the general public, press coverage enhanced our image in the general community.

The public relations effort was augmented by our distribution of a professionally printed brochure describing the school and its programs. The quality of the brochure is very important in promoting the image of the school. Use the talents of your school staff and parents to develop the brochure. Use the services of a neighborhood printer (or parent) to reduce expenses without sacrificing quality.

COSTS AND FUNDRAISING

The event described in this recipe cost over \$2,000. The main expenses were printing, the V.I.P. reception (food), awards, and custodial and security services.

Costs were kept to a minimum by using the donated services of neighborhood businesses, school volunteers, and civic groups. You will find that some printing and food businesses in your community will be more than happy to provide reduced-price (or free!) services in exchange for some publicity and recognition. It's best to offer them the publicity right up front -- don't wait for

them to ask. Explain to them that the birthday party will draw residents from around the area who would view their contribution to the event as a gesture of good will toward the entire community. You might also tell them that donations to a school are usually tax-deductible. [Note: always check with a tax advisor or the school district to determine the tax deductibility of the gift].

Organizational expenses were defrayed by small grants from our local public education fund, parent-teacher group, and other businesses. Our grant requests were very specific in terms of what we intended to accomplish as a result of the event; funders wanted to know how their dollars would further the mission of the school.

In summary, your expenses can be minimized by using volunteers, involving neighborhood businesses, and writing small grant funding requests. Our use of all three enabled us to hold all of our planned events.

EVALUATION

When the party's over ... the party's NOT over! It will be very important to assess what you accomplished (and what you didn't accomplish) as a result of the event.

In our case, we needed to evaluate whether we (1) enhanced community awareness of the school, (2) developed financial support, and (3) had the school viewed by younger parents as a viable educational alternative for their youngsters.

Regarding the first goal, we certainly received excellent media coverage.

Informal reports from community residents seemed to confirm our belief that the school is now receiving more recognition when the neighborhood events and matters are discussed. The birthday party helped us regain our prominent position as a neighborhood "anchor." We concluded that TV coverage was critical to our success.

The second goal, to enhance financial support, was certainly achieved in the short term. In the long term, our creativity in using our guest register (containing the names and addresses of all alumni, residents, and visitors who attended the birthday party) for future fundraising will be an important test of our efforts.

Since the big event, the school has been quite successful in obtaining funding support for academic programs from foundations. We concluded that our ability to conduct the birthday party successfully helped us to establish a good track record with funders.

Goal Three, to establish the school as a viable alternative to other public and private schools, has been an overwhelming success, as evidenced by the increase in enrollment of neighborhood children, and by the informal comments received by new parents, many of whom learned about the school for the first time at the birthday party. We determined that the professionalism of the staff, the enthusiasm of the volunteers, and the satisfaction of current parents who were present at the event were our keys to success in this area.

Finally, the birthday party was supposed to be fun. Everybody agreed that we

achieved this goal with flying colors!

Cecilia Landers is past president of the Parent-Teacher Group at the Garrett Heights Elementary School No. 212 in Baltimore.

DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Judy Wereley

The recipe for creating an effective partnership between a school and a business, or any other type of community organization, is really more like a blueprint for a happy marriage than a formula for a quickly enjoyed culinary treat. Partnerships are designed to last for a long time. They take careful planning and a sincere commitment to work together toward mutual goals, to understand and appreciate differences, to evaluate progress and to make changes as new needs arise.

GETTING STARTED

Just as a successful marriage depends upon a certain amount of self-knowledge before the spouses choose each other, a good partnership requires that both the school and the prospective partner undertake a bit of self-study before plunging into a partnership. The business partner may refer to this phase of the school's preparation process as a **needs analysis** and to their own internal review as a resource review.

Business partners sometimes tend to speak a slightly different language than do educators. They are into "Quality Circles" and "Total Quality Management" or "TQM". Educators, on the other hand, have been known to completely mystify a would-be partner with their own jargon concerning Chapter I funds, ARD

procedures and DEC classes. With some exposure, however, both partners soon come to easily translate unfamiliar terms into comparable concepts.

Let us take a moment though, to clearly acknowledge that when we talk about partnerships, we are often dealing with relationships between different cultures where a good deal of effort must be expended, at least in the beginning, to understand the nature, operational methods, resources, limitations, and aspirations of the prospective partner.

The business or organization that agrees to become your school's partner wants to be sure that what you expect is realistic and doable. For example, a nonprofit hospital may be a wonderful partner to a school that is looking for help with career education or curriculum enhancement in the areas of health and science, but a disappointing one for a school expecting the donation of computers or help with providing busses for field trips.

To put it simply, the preparation stage of this partnership recipe suggests that the school ought to conduct a self-study to identify its strengths and limitations. A prospective partner will be depending upon the school to provide the initial agenda for the partnership. It is important that the principal and others on the school team have a clear idea about what they

are doing well and where they need help.

The first meeting with a potential partner should be an opportunity for both sides to provide honest information about their respective organizations so that each can decide whether their needs and resources complement each other. Partnerships take too much work to be entered into lightly. Obviously, in identifying needs, it is helpful for the school to suggest a broad range of desirable options requiring the commitment of varying levels of human and financial resources, giving the business a range of possible ways to respond positively.

Many schools maintain an ongoing comprehensive wish list. It can be useful to share this list with a partner if the list is put into priority order and related to specific instructional goals. However, if the school's **ONLY** identified need is funding, it is probably a grant rather than a partnership that you should be seeking.

WHAT IS A SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP?

The following is one commonly accepted description of a school partnership:

A PARTNERSHIP is defined as a mutually supportive relationship between two organizations in which the partners commit themselves to specific goals and activities ultimately intended to benefit students.

Partnerships may be open-ended or optionally renewed at some agreed upon interval. Personal interaction between the partners is usually an important feature of the arrangement.

There are some key elements that make a

partnership different from other support relationships your school may have. Most partnerships involve the investment of **human** as well as physical and/or financial resources.

A partnership is usually a relationship that is expected to continue over a significant period of time. It is **not** a one-time donation or presentation. As valuable as these may be, they are not partnerships. When funding occurs in a partnership, it is most often in the context of some mutually planned activity or goal rather than as an intervention from an external source. Funding, while always welcome, is seldom the main focus of a healthy partnership.

Another important feature of a school partnership is that it is a **two-way** relationship. The most obvious contribution the school can make to its partner is the preparation of able students for the workforce, as well as positive public recognition of the partner's efforts and contributions. Many schools find other innovative ways to benefit their partners. Offering the school auditorium for business meetings, decorating the partner's establishment with student art work, or having students perform at some corporate affair, are but a few. The school should always be alert to ways it can give something back to its partner.

OUTREACH: HOW TO INTEREST A POTENTIAL PARTNER IN YOUR SCHOOL

Once you have your partnership goals firmly in mind, outreach can be accomplished in several ways. Some needs may most easily be met by the businesses and organizations in your local school

neighborhood. A good beginning is to plan a neighborhood canvass or walking tour to make sure you are aware of all of the resources available. Parents and older students can help with this task. You might want to assign interested classes different areas of the school neighborhood to check out. At this point, you are not asking that any contact actually be made. You are just gathering information about potential targets.

Once you have your list of businesses and organizations identified, a number of strategies can be used to make your potential partner more aware of and interested in your school. A straightforward letter of invitation from the principal or PTA president will sometimes work. Frequently though, it's necessary to use a little more creativity to get the kind of response you want. Here are some ideas that have worked.

- * Have students interview area residents and business owners to do an oral history of the community. Solicit local business and community support to publish and distribute it. (Of course, as always, students' security must be kept in mind as you pursue these interviews.)

- * Arrange for groups of students to visit area businesses. Do a display in the school lobby featuring a different business each month. Invite the owner and employees in to see the exhibit featuring them.

- * Write a clever "want ad" for a partner. Publish it in your local community newspaper or on a flyer to be delivered to local businesses and organizations.

Once you have members of your community involved with your school, it is much more likely that they will accept your invitation to establish a continuing partnership.

If your identified needs indicate that you really should be seeking a relationship with one of the larger businesses in the metropolitan area, it is always worth trying a direct letter from the principal to the chief executive of the company you have in mind, especially if you have done your homework and can state your case convincingly. Many school systems, however, have identified a central office staff person who may be able to assist you in making such a contact. That person should be aware of which companies are already committed to other schools. Knowing this may save you time and effort and allow you to direct your appeal where it will have more likelihood of succeeding. Help may even be available through a local partnership committee to recruit a suitable partner for you. In Baltimore City, for instance, many schools have filed formal partnership applications detailing their partnership needs. A roster of schools seeking partnerships is maintained and used to direct potential partners who either self-refer or are recruited by members of a Partnership Advisory Committee to appropriate schools. The name and phone number of the person responsible for partnerships in your school district can be obtained by calling your local or state department of education.

If you are successful in finding a partner on your own, be sure your central office contact is aware of it so that your partner will be included in any recognition activities that are centrally planned. Many

school systems have ceremonial documents available to formalize your partnership. The kick off of a new partnership can be an excellent opportunity to invite media recognition. Again, your central office coordinator may be able to help you with some of these details.

MANAGING YOUR PARTNERSHIP: THE CASE FOR A SCHOOL-BASED PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

You have now identified your new partner. The commitment has been made, and it is time to get down to the important business of building a good working relationship. Although some principals function very well as the "Lone Ranger" in their partnerships, most productive partnerships are managed by a **Partnership Committee**. This committee is usually made up of the principal, one or two interested teachers or counselors, a parent, and often, an older student.

One person on the school staff and one person representing the partner organization should be designated the official contact persons for the partnership. It will be their responsibility to convene the meetings and see to necessary implementation details on each side of the partnership.

It is **critical** that the principal of the school and the chief executive of the partner organization show strong commitment and act as cheerleaders for the partnership. It is **not** necessary that they maintain day to day management of the partnership as long as they provide continuing support to those they have charged with that responsibility. For instance, a teacher who is managing a

partnership needs access to a telephone and time to make and return calls during business hours.

Volunteers who come to the partner school on behalf of a business should be recognized and rewarded for their "extra mile" undertakings and not penalized by their managers for being absent from the worksite. A recent survey of working partnerships indicates that most partnership committees meet at least quarterly with many meeting monthly.

What do members of the partnership committee do? They plan and coordinate the work of the partners in the school. They publicize partnership events to the entire school community and avert potential partnership problems such as having a cadre of tutors show up at the school to find their students away on a field trip. They also serve as a conduit for new program planning and requests for support to the partner.

Nothing makes partner volunteers more uncomfortable than being besieged from all sides with special appeals every time they come to the school. A good rule of thumb to avoid such a situation is to channel requests through the principal and the partnership committee. The committee should be aware of the partner's annual budget and planning cycle and have the opportunity to prioritize requests to the partner in accordance with the school's most important objectives.

Most strong partnerships begin with a few carefully planned activities to give both sides a chance to learn how to work well together. It is important to pin down who is responsible for what, when and where

the activity will take place, and which students will be involved. When initial endeavors are successful, both partners are encouraged to take on more complex commitments.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF A PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY IS SUCCESSFUL?

Another important role for the partnership committee is the evaluation of ongoing programs. Often, evaluation is the weakest part of a partnership program. In the enthusiasm of planning and getting started on an exciting new venture, little thought is given to how the partners will decide whether what they are doing is achieving the expected outcome.

As schools and businesses commit more and more resources to their partnerships, it is important that they know whether or not their time and energy is paying off. While some partnership activities such as mentoring may be difficult to evaluate because changes are very personal and occur slowly, in many instances there are some fairly simple ways to evaluate progress. Attendance data and grade improvement are two frequently watched indicators for many types of academic enhancement and incentive programs. Two helpful reference books on evaluating partnerships are listed at the end of this article.

Evaluation should **not** be allowed to choke the life out of your partnership, but at the same time, with staff changes occurring as rapidly as they are today on both sides of the partnership, new managers have the right to expect some evidence that existing commitments should be continued.

Conversely, if a partnership activity turns out to be nothing more than a public relations device, and sadly, occasionally some do, school personnel need some objective information on which to base the decision to discontinue certain activities. Evaluation is a sound practice all the way around and an important ingredient in your recipe for partnership success.

SUMMARY

Partnerships can provide a variety of highly valued enhancements in our schools. Common among these are:

- * instructional enrichment such as tutors, guest speakers, expert demonstrations, and field trips;
- * career education, including industry - generated curricula, shadowing opportunities, work-study and summer jobs;
- * opportunities for staff development;
- * public relations expertise;
- * assistance with parent outreach and support;
- * sponsorship of various academic, cultural and athletic events;
- * provision of targeted incentive and award programs;
- * the donation of services, equipment and supplies.

The recipe for partnership success includes the following "Helpful Hints" for working with a business or community

partner:

- * Know your school's strengths and weaknesses. Be ready to prioritize needs and target available resources in relation to your school's short and long term goals.
- * Be creative in your outreach for a partner.
- * Identify a strong partnership team with broad faculty, parent and student representation.
- * Appoint a dependable person as your school's coordinator.
- * Assure strong principal support.
- * Establish guidelines to screen and coordinate plans and requests.
- * Determine a method for evaluating partnership activities and providing feedback to your partner.
- * BE SURE TO THANK YOUR PARTNER PUBLICLY AND OFTEN!

SOME HELPFUL REFERENCES ON BUILDING AND MAINTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

Asche, June, Ed. D., Handbook for Principals and Teachers, National Association of Partnerships in Education, Alexandria, VA, 1989.

Lewis, Ann C., Partnerships Connecting School and Community, American Association of School Administrators, Arlington, VA, 1986.

Mc Millan, B. and Snyder, P., Allies in Education, Vols. I and II, Public Private Ventures, Philadelphia, PA, 1987.

Otterbourg, Susan D., Ed.D., How to Monitor and Evaluate Partnerships in Education: Measuring Their Success, Infomedia, Inc., Ellentown, FL, 1990.

Otterbourg, Susan D., Ed.D., and Adams, Don, (Eds.), Partnerships in Education: Measuring Their Success, Infomedia, Inc.: Ellentown, FL, 1991.

Shelton, C., The Doable Dozen, National Community Education Association, Alexandria, VA, 1987.

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FUND RAISING: THE AUCTION

Hillary Jacobs, Naomi Samuels, and Sherri Levin

Does your Parent-Teacher Organization need to raise more funds? Does your basic candy sale and PTA dues cover only the basics? Are your parents interested in doing more for the school, like purchasing classroom materials, gym mats and developing a computer program? If so, then an auction might be right for you.

The following recipe describes an evening fund-raising party, where items donated by businesses, retail shops, and individuals (including parents) are put up for sale to the highest bidder. Our first auction evening in 1990 consisted of a dinner buffet, a silent auction, a live auction, and other entertainment (e.g., a band, fortune tellers, and strolling musicians).

BUDGET

— The ticket price for the event should cover food, entertainment, and any charges related to room rental.

— The ticket price also may be a sensitive issue depending on what parents can afford to spend on a night out. Because of concern that the tickets were priced too high the first year, we sent out a questionnaire to all parents as we planned our 1991 auction, giving them a range of prices from which to choose, and indicating what each price would buy (e.g., dessert only, bull roast, full dinner, etc.). That way each parent had the opportunity to voice his opinion -- it was a democratic approach.

— Since this is a fund raiser, it is important to get as many of your party needs donated as possible. This might include getting the party room rental for free, or the printing of the invitations at no cost. School parents may be graphic designers who can create invitations and signage, or maybe a parent is in the printing business and you can get a substantial discount. Are there musicians in your community? Have them donate their services to entertain!

VOLUNTEERS

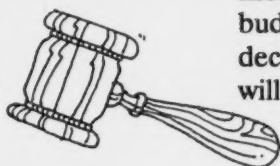
— The more the merrier! It is necessary to have a core steering committee to oversee all plans, and to make sure that the plans are properly implemented by volunteers.

— The areas in which volunteers are needed include: soliciting auction items; picking up (or securing contracts for) donated items; decoration planning; invitation listing and addressing; auction invitation and program copy writing; advertising sales for the program book; distribution of the program book before the event; set-up on the day of the event; registration; checking out (collecting money for purchased items and preparing receipts); and clean up.

PLANNING THE EVENT

You should establish a firm date for the

— auction at least six months before the event. This will allow ample time to solicit and pick up auction items and arrange the particulars of the event.



— Investigate party rooms in your neighborhood, as well as local caterers. Keep in mind the following:

- The size of the room must accommodate the number of people expected (you might even consider the school gym).

- What the room rental includes (tables, chairs, linens, trash removal, etc.)

- Caterers can be expensive! Before even speaking to a caterer, determine what your admission cost will be so that you can determine what you'll be able to afford to spend. Consider buffet dinners, pot luck suppers, a bull roast, or an event where only dessert is served. Remember, the purpose of the auction is to make money.

- Do you want to serve wine, beer, or liquor? Does the location you've selected have a license? If not, you'll have to get an appropriate license from your local authority.

— Entertainment is an extra for an auction. See what kind of talent is available in your school and community--and maybe they will perform for free. Taped music is another possibility.

— Decorations are fun, and may be necessary depending on the condition of the party room. Flowers in particular are nice, but can be very expensive. Decorations should be the

smallest item on the budget, and is the first item that should be deleted if the budget gets tight. Focus your efforts on decorating the tables where auction items will be displayed.

— Contact a local auction house to donate the services of an auctioneer to run the live auction.

— Invitation and invitation lists are the heart of a successful event...

- The invitation list should include all current school parents, plus the parents of last year's graduates, and those of any incoming students. Also include people active in your community and any additional suggestions from school parents.

- The mailing includes an invitation, a response card and a return envelope with the school's address printed on it. Our envelopes were hand-addressed. This was a bulk mailing (over 200 pieces mean that you pay less postage--see your local post office for more information), and was sent out six weeks in advance.

- All school staff members were given one free ticket to the event

OBTAINING AUCTION ITEMS

— A letter containing an auction form and discussing our school's needs was bulk mailed to a list of shops, services, and individuals.

— Three weeks after the mailing we began making follow-up phone calls. Some made donation commitments, and asked us to pick them up, some said call

back, some said send another letter, and some said no. Don't give up on the phone calls. Persistence pays off!

✚ Collecting items or signed donation forms (used for gifts certificates, restaurant donations, etc.) should be done as soon as someone says yes. Some forms or items will be sent directly to the school. Most will not. It is up to your volunteers to make these pick-ups as soon as possible. Set aside a safe place at the school to store all items.

THE AUCTION PROGRAM BOOK

✚ The program book includes a list of all items to be auctioned at your event. The items are categorized (e.g., Dining Out, Boutique, Sports, Services) and each is assigned a category number. Each item is given a one sentence description that includes the donor's name and estimated retail value.

✚ Advertisements are sold in quarter, half, and full page sizes. Advertisements should be sold by your volunteers. Ad forms should be distributed to students to give to their parents. Neighborhood organizations, businesses, and others should be approached.

✚ The cover of our book was designed by the same person who designed our invitations. The printer designed and typeset the rest of the book. Make sure that you proofread the printer's galleys several times. That is your last chance to make changes!

✚ Program books are hand-delivered to ticket buyers one week before the event. This allows all guests to preview all

items that will be up for bid at the auction.

MONEY COLLECTION

✚ All monies collected for this event, from ticket sales, advertising revenue, and auction proceeds should be turned over to your treasurer or other assigned volunteer. One person should ultimately be responsible for all collections.

Speaking of money, please don't forget that when your patrons purchase auction items, they are making the check payable to the school. And since they're paying the school, their contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

RESPONSES TO THE INVITATION

✚ Select one person to be responsible for maintaining ticket sale lists and turning money over to the treasurer.

✚ A list of all attendees should be prepared for check-in at the registration desk at the time of the event.

THE EVENT!

✚ Set-up the morning of the event includes having volunteers arrange all silent auction items by category on tables with bid sheets and pencils.

✚ Decorations should be put in place at this time. Tables and chairs should be arranged as necessary.

✚ When the guests arrive, they will be greeted by volunteers manning the

registration desk. Names will be checked off of a master ticket sales list for those that have already paid. If they haven't, money will be collected at this time. Bid numbers are assigned on the back blank cover of the program book. **Bid numbers are used as account numbers, so that when items are bid, you will know who will owe money at the end of the evening. Bid numbers make it easy to add up purchases by account number.**

— The silent auction can take place before dinner and while food is being served. The items and the bid sheets are arranged by category. The bidder writes his number and amount of his bid on the bid sheet, which already indicates the minimum or opening bid. Each new bid must be written on the first available blank line and must be higher than the previous bid by the minimum increment indicated. At the close of the silent auction, bid sheets are collected. The account number and amount of the highest bid on the sheet is circled and submitted to the cashier.

— The live auction is run by the auctioneer. The items selected for this auction should be those most in demand, with a minimum value of \$40.00. To enter a bid in the live auction, the bidder raises his number (written on the back of the program book). Bids should be made promptly. The highest bid

acknowledged by the auctioneer will be the purchaser. In the event of any dispute between bidders, the auctioneer shall act for the PTO in determining the successful bidder, or will re-sell the item in dispute.

— All sales at the auction are final. There are no exchanges or refunds (remember, this is not a store, it's a fund raiser!!). All items and certificates must be paid for in full by cash or check at the conclusion of the auction.

— Bills for all items purchased at the silent auction are prepared during the live auction. Bills are compiled by account number, i.e., the number assigned to each bidder or family. Live auction items that are purchased are noted by a volunteer and added to the silent auction bill. At the end of the auction, all items are picked up at a cashier booth. The attendee gives the cashier his number, and a bill is produced. Once the person pays the bill, his purchased items are given to him after having been grouped together by volunteers.

Good luck on your auction!

Hillary Jacobs, Naomi Samuels, and Sherri Levin are parents at the Mount Washington Elementary School, PS 221, in Baltimore City.

WRITING GRANTS

Carl S. Hyman

"You've got a bright idea!! I only wish we could afford to carry out this project." That's usually what people say to you when they want **you** to execute a project but may not be able to give you the resources to get it done. Don't get mad -- GET YOUR OWN RESOURCES: Write a Grant!



A grant is a gift that someone (a person, neighborhood association, the government, a foundation, etc.) gives you to carry out a worthy project. Grants can help you get new books and audiovisual equipment, repair musical instruments, get computers, or try some unique instructional program. No matter how much or how little money or support you need, putting together a grant application can be fun and easy.

The following recipe discusses *the contents* of a grant proposal. By following the step-by-step instructions, you will be well on your way to writing a good proposal. It's suggested that you read this whole recipe first. Then go back and look over each part of the grant-writing process (each part is noted by a check mark). For more detailed information on topics such as evaluations and budgets, consult the index.



GATHER YOUR THOUGHTS

The first step in the grant-writing process is to get your ideas out of your head and

on to paper. Remember, your goal in this step is **NOT** to write an encyclopedia. Instead, you want to take a page or two to describe your ideas about:

- What you want to do.
- Why you want to do it.
- Who will be involved.
- When the project will be done.
- How it will be accomplished.

During this step, you may find that the more you reflect on what you *think* you want to do, the better the ideas that emerge will be. On the other hand, you may discover that your concept has to be totally re-designed to work properly in your school or community.

At this stage, you also want to give some thought to how much your idea might cost, and who may be willing to pay for it. However, don't ever make the mistake of worrying about where the money is going to come from *before* you've completely thought through your ideal program.



SHARE YOUR IDEA

One of the most important reasons for writing down your idea is to be able to "sell it" to other people who are going to be part of the project. Depending on the nature of the proposal and who you represent, this may be as simple as gathering fellow parents around a table for a discussion, or as complicated as getting your principal, his/her boss, and his/her boss's boss to approve (even before you

get started).

If you're working with a parent group or a neighborhood association, it will be very important to make sure that there is some agreement about what you're planning to do. Remember, it's a lot easier to sell an idea to the school staff and the principal when the team is 100% behind the effort. If you are a classroom educator, consult with your colleagues. You may find out, for example, that your wonderful idea has already been tried in another classroom or school.

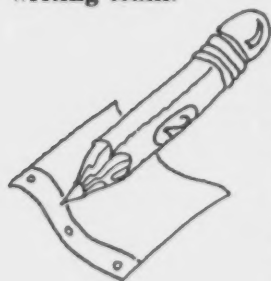
If you are an administrator, you will want to make sure that the intent of the program is consistent with the goals of your school, and, where appropriate, the school system. Approval of a grant concept may be mandated by the school system in certain jurisdictions.



GET YOUR TEAM TOGETHER

Terrific! Everyone loved the idea, and they want you to get started on the grant proposal immediately. **NOW WHAT?**

Now, you have to actually write a *proposal*. A proposal is just like a concept paper, except that it is much more detailed. We'll get to that in a minute. First, you need to get together a **grant-writing team**.



You've heard the expression *the more the merrier*. Well, forget it -- it's just the opposite when you're writing a grant. The fewer

people that are involved, the quicker the job will get done, and the easier it will be to write a more complete and accurate proposal.

This is NOT to say that you don't need a writing team -- you do. An ideal team consists of 3 people, and **NEVER** more than 5. And it is of the utmost importance that you have the right people on board. A school-community project, for example, must have representatives from both the school and the community if it is going to work properly. The writing team for a classroom project should definitely include a teacher, preferably the one in whose classroom the project will be implemented. In other words, major "stake holders" need to be part of the team from the beginning.

Above all, the grant-writing team should be able to write or at least contribute in a major way toward putting together the proposal. In summary, your spending time to assemble the right team should result in a better proposal and therefore, more success in getting funded.



WRITE THE PROPOSAL

Every grant proposal is like a fingerprint -- no two are alike. Some funders have a special form that they want you to use when applying for funds. Others don't. This recipe includes all of the major components that you'll need to complete almost any proposal. If you answer each of the questions under each heading below, you will have gathered all the

major parts needed for a complete grant application. You'll find this format especially useful even if you find out that a special application needs to be completed at a later time.

PROPOSAL SECTION #1: BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF NEED

In this section, you will be giving information on why the project is being proposed. (There is obviously a need for the project or you wouldn't be reading this!) The key here is deductive reasoning. That is, you'll want to describe a general condition that exists in the world (example: we are moving into the information age and kids are unprepared) and relate this condition to a particular issue in your school (we don't have enough computers). The following questions should be answered in this section of the proposal:

What is the Problem to be Addressed?

Here, you'll want to make a case for doing your project. What is it that needs fixing? What will happen if it doesn't get fixed? If nothing necessarily needs to be fixed, what creative, new idea are you addressing? Are there any well respected educators, business people, or scholars who have written anything on the subject that supports your view? If so, it will be useful to say so in this section by quoting newspapers, magazines, or research papers.

What Is the Need for the Service or Program? This is where you describe how your school's population characteristics, equipment situation, faculty, physical plant, etc. lend themselves

to the issue at hand. Continuing with the computer example, you would want to describe the ratio of computers to students, the preparation of the staff (or lack thereof) to teach computer technology, and how the academic achievement of your students will be affected. Does research show that poor students benefit greatly from computer use? If your school has a large portion of lower-income students, you will want to include this type of information here.

What is the Capacity for the Service or Program? We all have a tendency to describe gloom and doom. When answering the question above, you'll probably spend a great deal of time writing about how terrible things are (which, after all, is why you're writing a proposal). However, the people who give you money also want to know that the dollars they invest will improve the situation. They will want to know *why* your project will be successful. Capacity refers to the strengths of your school, community, etc. that will make the project work. In our computer example, you would want to describe the enthusiasm of the students, the qualifications of the faculty, and the support of the community and the school for the program.

What Population Will Be Served?

Funders are equally interested in the "target population" to be served by the grant. Will services be geared toward all children, or those who need the most help? How many kids are we talking about? In what grade? At what reading level? Be as specific as possible.

PROPOSAL SECTION #2: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project description is the heart of the proposal. In this section, you will be describing in great detail what you are going to do, when you're going to do it, who is going to do it, and how it will be done. This section will be complete when you have answered the following questions:



What is the Purpose of the Project?

In one paragraph, state what this project is all about. A simple statement might look something like this:

The purpose of this project is to start a computer technology program at the Elm Street Elementary School. The project will increase student achievement, as measured by classroom performance. The faculty will be introduced to new management tools, thereby increasing their classroom productivity.

What are the Project Goals and Objectives? First, let's start with some definitions; a goal is a major purpose -- what you intend to achieve. An objective is a sub-goal, describing how you achieve parts of the big goal. In plain English, a goal describes how you're going to "win the war"; an objective describes how you

"win the battle." For example, a goal would be to increase student achievement. Associated objectives might include (a) improving grades; (b) increasing test scores; and (c) demonstrating proficiency on the computer. [Exactly *how* these gains will be measured is included in the evaluation section below].

Goals and objectives should be written in brief outline form. It's no crime to have one or two goals. Just remember that everything you intend to do should be reflected in your goals.

How Will the Project be Implemented and Managed?

In this section, you will be describing in detail how the project is going to work. The Daily Operations part will tell how the program will be run on a day-to-day basis; this includes who will do what, how it will be done, and when. Spend a good deal of time on this part -- make sure it's realistic, given the volunteers, staff, and other resources that you have. Pretend that the project has started and you are in charge. Does it work the way that you had planned?

The Training part should discuss training needs, if any. This is very important. In our computer example, a very well defined project will not work without staff preparation (and that's even *before* the actual project gets off the ground).

Finally, it is wise to include a Time Line in this section. This will show a task and the date by which the task will be accomplished. Include major events, like training, purchasing equipment, project start date, planned media events, and evaluation dates.

PROPOSAL SECTION #3: EVALUATION

In the eyes of some grantors, the evaluation of the project is the single most important aspect of the proposal. Why? Because a foundation, person, or business is *investing* resources in your project. If your program is successful, they will want to know why, so that the effort can be repeated effectively in other schools and communities.

There are many different types of evaluations. Most larger foundations are very specific about the format and content of the evaluation. [For specific information on evaluations, and assistance in doing them, consult the Table of Contents and Index].

How Will the Goals and Objectives be Measured to Assure That the Project Achieved Intended Outcomes? The best place to start thinking about your evaluation is to look back over your goals and objectives. In our computer example, we said that we would "increase student achievement" and went on to mention the objectives of increasing test scores, grades, and the like. Well, what do we *really mean* by "increasing grades"? In the evaluation, we are going to *define how* to measure this. It might be as simple as comparing the grades of students who use the computer against those who don't, or comparing students' test scores at the beginning and end of the year. You will be attempting to show that your project made a positive difference.

Each objective should have a corresponding evaluation measure. The object is to be able to set up a situation where you will be able to demonstrate that

something changed positively as a result of your effort. The evaluation process starts as soon as your project begins. This is why it is so important to have your measurements in place from the very beginning.

How Will the Evaluation be Used to Improve Future Outcomes? Evaluations can provide a lot of good information, so it's wise to let the funder know what you intend to do with the data once you've collected it. Usually it will be used to help you improve your program after the grant has ended. The results might also benefit other schools or communities. Will you share your results? With whom? And for what reason? Be as specific as possible.

PROPOSAL SECTION #4: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

Another thing that most funders want to know is that the money or resources given will be spent *efficiently*. In other words, can your project "kill two birds with one stone?" In our computer example, a proposal that includes late afternoon classes for the community (older adults, girl scouts, etc.), or shows how the city literacy office or library will be involved in planning or implementing your project, will be a real plus.

If you do plan to have community or agency involvement, make sure that you state why cooperation is important and how their input to the project will be made. A "steering committee", composed of community, school, and agency representatives, is one suggested method.

Organizational Capability. You and one billion other people are writing a grant at

any given time. That's why it's important to show why your proposal is especially worthy. The proposal writing team should spend some time discussing the following:

How Does This Project Fit In With the Goals of the School, School System, and Community? Explain how your project fits into the overall plan for improving your school and community. Get a copy of the school's and school district's goals and mission statement. Show how your project works in concert with the plan. Also indicate why your school, community, parent association, etc. is the best place or organization to implement this project.

PROPOSAL SECTION #5: THE BUDGET

DON'T PANIC!

The budget section is, by far, the easiest section of the proposal to write. Answer these questions:



Did You Ask for Everything That You Need? The first task is to make a list of everything that you will need to make the project work. This includes salaries (and benefits), equipment, materials, and supplies. It also may include money to train staff members or residents. Don't make the common mistake of setting a budget and then thinking about what you need. Rather, you should determine all of your needs first. Also, think about what you need versus what you merely want, because you may have to reduce your budget at a later date.

Have You Added Up "In-Kind" Contributions? In-kind contributions are

goods and services that people will donate to your project. They're not *free*, per se, although you won't need to include them in your dollar request to the funder. For example, if a neighbor indicates that he will volunteer to teach a computer class for 10 hours per week, his in-kind contribution is the value of his services (say, \$15 per hour x 10 hours per week = \$150 per week). Other in-kind contributions typically include the use of space, electricity, and the teacher's and principal's time devoted to the project (translated into dollars).

Funders want to see the total *value* of in-kind contributions. It sends the message that your school or community is serious about working to improve a situation.

PROPOSAL SECTION #6: THE ABSTRACT

Whew! You've written a proposal. Just when you thought that you were finished... you're not. The last writing task is to produce an abstract.

An abstract is a summary of your entire proposal, written in just one or two paragraphs. It is placed on page one of your proposal (along with your letter to the funder). Think of the abstract as a very short version of your plan. Its purpose is to allow the funder and others to understand the important aspects of your project without having to read the entire piece.

The abstract should include the reason the project is being done, who will be served, how and when they will be served, the overall goal, and expected outcomes. Also indicate if other organizations or agencies

are involved, and their role.



GET THE PROJECT APPROVED

At the beginning of this recipe, much was said about the need to make sure that others in the school and/or community were well informed of your plans. Now that the proposal is drafted, you should share it with your steering committee, principal, neighborhood association president, and other interested parties.

A school project must often be approved by the school administrator, and/or school system personnel before you send the proposal off to the funder. Check to make sure.

When you share the proposal, call it a "draft", and expect others to make a few suggestions. **DON'T BE DEFENSIVE!!** Just because you spent what seems to be your whole life writing a proposal, don't expect others to love it at first sight. Letting others make constructive comments and changes may strengthen your project.

DO'S AND DON'T'S

DO

... include attachments that will strengthen your proposal. Resumes of qualified project staff, positive news stories related to your school effort, and letters of support are important. Note, however, that some funders will specifically ask you **NOT** to include attachments.

... seek the assistance of experts in developing your proposal. The school

system's grants office, teachers with experience writing curriculum, and influential community members, can all be extremely helpful and save you valuable time.

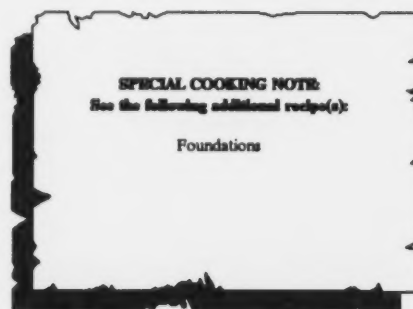
... leave yourself **PLENTY** of time to develop the proposal, seek approval, and make revisions.

DON'T

... exclude significant parties from the grant writing or proposal review team. If someone is going to be will be deeply involved in the project, they should also be part of your team from the beginning.

... give up. Writing a proposal is hard work, but if you stick with it, the end will justify the means.

... share the specifics of your proposal with the public until your writing committee has completed its work, and you have secured appropriate approvals.



Carl Hyman is director of the Office of Project and Grant Management for the Baltimore City Public Schools, and editor of the School-Community Cookbook.

USING YOUR COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Robert Giloith

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

There are more reasons than ever for schools and their communities to get to know each other, and hopefully, to work together. Schools need resources

-- parent involvement in the classroom and curriculum, school advocates and boosters, new sources of money and in-kind services, and long-term direction. Communities care about their children's future, understand how a lack of education can cripple a family's and a neighborhood's well being, and have educational aspirations of their own.

Yet schools and communities are frequently out of touch, and do not know how to communicate with each other. There are many reasons for this lack of communication. Schools are little worlds of their own that answer to big bureaucracies outside the community. Schools often ignore what is immediately around them. Likewise, communities often do not know what schools need, tend to think that schools just concern parents whose children attend that school, or don't know how to approach school personnel. Some community members may have mixed feelings about their own school experience that keeps them from getting involved in their local school. And sometimes communities have different opinions about the roles that schools should play.



Three roadblocks to school and community partnerships must be overcome early in the relationship if it is to work.

First, trying to find someone to blame for the problems with schools ends up being counterproductive and a turn-off. It's a complicated issue. Second, arguing that more money is the only priority can get in the way of real improvements that can be made in the current situation. Third, schools can't solve all the problems; that's why they need the community to get involved.

Schools and communities must get to know each other better. Together they are main ingredients for quality education and healthy neighborhoods and cities. To make better use of community resources, schools should understand *what defines communities, what makes communities tick, and how schools can effectively work with communities.*

WHAT IS COMMUNITY?

There is no one definition of community that can guide schools. That's part of the challenge; there's more out there than schools think, but they must look for it.

Community certainly means those residents and businesses within a school's boundaries. But community usually comprises a larger area -- especially for elementary schools that are very

neighborhood specific. Sometimes community organizations serve a section of the city -- the southeast or northwest sectors, for example. And some community resources, available to all who ask, are provided on a city-wide basis.

There are four community building blocks. All communities have these building blocks but in differing amounts and types, depending upon the history of the community, its current state of development, and its characteristics such as incomes, family size, and land uses.

Of course, the first building block is the *people* who live there -- their skills, energy, and community commitment. Many people have contact with schools because they are parents. There are many other people of all ages -- often with time, energy, and money -- who do not have a parental connection to the school.

The mix of people in communities and their needs cannot be ignored. Sometimes community and family self-esteem has to be nurtured so that they can support schoolchildren. In other cases, there may need to be community outreach to bridge intergenerational tensions between neighborhood residents and parents.

A second building block is *community institutions* -- churches and synagogues, civic groups, block clubs, service organizations, neighborhood associations, public agencies (e.g., libraries or recreation centers), special purpose non-profit organizations, and business associations. Some of these institutions are quite small and specialized. Others serve the broader community and take on "big picture" issues such as choosing school superintendents or

school funding inequities in the city and state.

A third building block consists of *businesses* of all different kinds. Most communities have small retail businesses, either on shopping strips or scattered throughout the neighborhood. These businesses care about having a good reputation with residents. There are also larger businesses -- manufacturers, wholesalers, printers, hospitals, and trucking firms -- that exist in the wider community. They also care about having a good reputation, but, in addition, are concerned about having access to a pool of qualified employees in the future.

The fourth building block is a group of people, civic organizations, and businesses who connect communities with the bigger world -- city, state, and federal governments, the corporate community, and people throughout the city and metropolitan area. These are *community leaders*. They include elected officials, the officers of major community organizations, and influential business people. Community leadership is always changing, although many community leaders have remarkable staying power, and some of the most effective community leaders have low profiles.

One of the important things to know about community is that the four building blocks are connected to each other in multiple ways. Community really is a set of overlapping circles. Residents belong to churches and civic associations. A non-profit organization may run a reading program for residents who did not complete school. Business people may have grown up in the community and may

serve on the education committee of the local chamber of commerce. And community leaders often have the uncanny ability to build coalitions among different building blocks for the purpose of improving some aspect of the community.

WHAT MAKES COMMUNITIES TICK?

All of the various community building blocks -- people, community institutions, businesses and leaders -- are motivated by different goals. People want a higher standard of living. Non-profit organizations want to solve the problems they were organized to solve. Businesses want to prosper and community leaders want to make a difference.

Of course, it's not that simple. Most of the time, people and organizations act for a number of reasons -- some of which are not obvious even to themselves. Community residents, for example, are motivated to take actions based upon family, friendship, neighborliness, or ethnicity. Residents may organize to protect what they have, protest not having enough, or concentrate on getting ahead -- and thus out of the neighborhood in some cases.

In some neighborhoods everyone is new or views where they live as only temporary. People are unorganized. The few businesses remaining in the neighborhood are absentee owned. That neighborhood scenario is tough for schools to build partnerships with because there does not seem to be anything to hold onto. There's no sense of future. But such a neighborhood, in a matter of years, may change around as people settle in, agree that improvements are needed, get

motivated by a creative and dedicated community resident, and build confidence from making a difference -- perhaps at their neighborhood school.

Schools will have to be both watchful and patient as they venture out into the community in search of friends and partners. They will have to think about what makes people and organizations tick -- who are the gatekeepers, who will sign on first, and who will deliver. Schools must remember that they have natural links to some of the more important community building blocks -- parents and children.

How Communities Can Help Schools

At this point, schools may rightly ask: If communities have so many groups that act for so many different reasons, are they really worth working with when we have so much else to do? Who needs more confusion?

There are yes and no answers to these pointed questions. Schools should work with communities, despite these complications, because communities have resources that schools need. Schools, it should be remembered, have many groups: teachers, students, parents, principals, volunteers, PTAs, central administration, and the board of education. Community resources can be tapped by one or several of these school groups.

☒ A neighborhood association may organize book drives, a scholarship fund, recruit tutors and classroom volunteers, or collect cash register tapes for computers.

A community advocacy group may fight

☑ funding cutbacks, the closing of a recreation center that the school uses, or pressure the central administration to get a new principal. It may also help turn parents and community members out for crucial meetings with the school.

☑ A coalition of religious leaders may sponsor cultural sensitivity workshops to promote ethnic or racial tolerance in the schools and wider community.

☑ Businesses may make financial contributions or donations of materials, and encourage employees to volunteer as speakers, tutors, or mentors. They may also adopt a specific school and provide it with a variety of resources over the long term.

☑ A non-profit organization or church may obtain funds to start enrichment programs that serve school children, such as child development, drug prevention, family literacy, or drop-out prevention. These programs, in turn, may result in more parent involvement in the school.

☑ A community coalition may decide to help schools lobby in city and state legislatures to secure resources and new programs.

☑ A community leader may call dramatic attention to the needs of community schools and challenge other community leaders to step into action.

These examples represent substantial additions to school resources.

Schools do not have the time, however, to get involved in all aspects of community life. In fact, few people or organizations get totally involved. There's simply too much going on. Rather, schools should learn how to stay in touch with the community building blocks, nurturing a network of supporters who can be called upon when needed. Given the widespread recognition of the importance of education, schools simply have to be open to the inquiries and offers of help from various community actors.

HOW SCHOOLS CAN WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH COMMUNITIES

Schools, as they get to know their communities, will learn what works. And it will be a learning process full of trial and error, missed opportunities, and wonderful happenings. Communities, in all their diversity, hopefully will learn what makes schools work as well. It has to be a two-way partnership.

There are a number of steps that encourage communities to respond favorably to schools:

☑ Do some homework on who should be invited to your school program.

☑ Bring community folks in early on a project.

☑ Provide an opportunity for real input into plans.

☑ Make sure community members eventually have a specific role and set of tasks.

Be sensitive to what makes community

- ☒ representatives receptive and how this relates to the project you have them involved in.

Turn around the above list and you have a list of what turns off community resources. People and organizations should not be:

- ⊗ brought in at the last minute -- after the fact;
- ⊗ lectured to about what is going to be done -- the teacher/principal way;
- ⊗ left out of the process;
- ⊗ treated as just part of the crowd;
- ⊗ treated as if meeting with the community is a bureaucratic mandate from downtown -- not a real reaching out.
- ⊗ told that there is no time for group discussion or input because the agenda is set;
- ⊗ treated as if they have already signed on;

Other problems will arise if:

- ⊗ there is an unwillingness to deal with the community on its own terms (e.g. times, places, schedules);
- ⊗ the school is presented as isolated from the rest of the community;
- ⊗ there are no follow-throughs by the school.

Building partnerships between schools and

communities means that both sides need to respect each other. That's the foundation. But it will take time. One school resource that often is underutilized in building these partnerships is the Parent Liaison. Principals simply can't do everything.

Communities may find it difficult to understand certain things about schools:

* Schools have many different parts that are not always in communication, i.e., students, teachers, parents, principals, volunteers, counselors, parent liaisons, PTAs, central administration, and the board of education.

* There are time constraints of the school day and year -- and of school personnel.

* There are limitations on the use of the buildings.

* There are mandates from the central office.

Other questions that the community might have are:

* What resources schools control.

* Why more parents are not involved in school affairs.

* Why decisions always seem to be made at the last minute.

Similarly, schools will have difficulty understanding community resources -- what motivates them and why they behave the way they do. The flux and topsy-turvy nature of communities will seem like chaos at first. And community actors do

make a common set of mistakes when they work with an unfamiliar actor like a school. These include:

- ⊗ making big commitments;
- ⊗ looking for someone to blame;
- ⊗ an inability to focus -- everything relates to the issue on their mind at that moment;
- ⊗ a hidden agenda that may have little to do with the school project;
- ⊗ fear of outsiders and a desire to protect what exists -- even if it is flawed;
- ⊗ a desire to move at a pace that does not acknowledge the school decision-making process -- either too fast or too slow;

- ⊗ a short attention span on any one project.

SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES GO TOGETHER

Schools working with the community building blocks will be enriched with new and expanded resources and the development of a school constituency -- cheerleaders and boosters -- who can be called upon again and again. Working together will also benefit communities, by making them better places to live, work, and raise families.

Robert Giloth, Ph.D., is Executive Director of the SouthEast Community Organization in Baltimore.

ESTABLISHING SCHOOL-BASED ADULT LITERACY PROJECTS

Maggi Gaines

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps you have been thinking about starting a program in your neighborhood school for adults who want to learn to read, or who need to improve their basic skills in reading and math. Maybe there are parents of children in your school who could use help with basic skills. Or maybe, there are parents in your school who are embarrassed because their children read better than they do, or who would like to have the skills to read to their children, or to help their children with homework. Chances are, there are people in your school and family or in the community around your school who could use help in reading and math or basic skills. A school-based literacy program might just be a good idea for your community and neighborhood school.

As you begin the process of thinking through the creation of a school-based literacy or basic skills program, it is important to remember that for some people school wasn't always a friendly place or a place where they met with success. It is particularly important that as you begin this process, you take steps to make the program inviting, and very different from typical school experiences. The adults who may want to come into this program are people with lots of life experience which should be recognized and validated. They are also adults

possessing lots of courage and commitment, both of which will have to be working together, just to help give people that extra push to become adult learners.

Also, at the onset of this process, it may help to remember that learning is a lifelong adventure for all of us. We all have new things we want to learn, or areas where we would like to have an opportunity to brush up on our skills. It may even be helpful as you begin an adult literacy program, or skill development program, to also begin another adult learning program in your school. Another adult learning program of some sort would help to reinforce the message that lots of adults seek opportunities to learn, and that learning is a good thing to do, for everyone. In other words, not all adult learning is for the purpose of remediation. It's also good to have the courage to know that you need help, and the wisdom to be able to get that help.

WHY START A SCHOOL-BASED LITERACY PROGRAM?

School-based literacy programs are good places to offer learning opportunities to adults. It may be worthwhile to call the program a skills development program, rather than a literacy program since the word "literacy" may scare some people away. A school-based program for adult

skill development will give adults in the neighborhood, particularly those with children in school, a chance to consider improving their basic skills. It is something lots of people with young school-aged children want to do in order to help their youngsters gain school success. People with children who are a little older sometimes consider going back to school because they have the time to do so, and because they seek more job opportunities. More and more, people realize that to get a job, keep a job, and hopefully advance in a job, they need to be good readers, comfortable with numbers, and able to think in orderly ways in order to solve problems. Your school-based skill development program should be targeted in those areas. You may also want to focus your program on helping adults know what and how they can work with their children in order to help them do those things which will help them succeed in school.

You may want to remember that part of the message of a school-based skill development program needs to be that it is cool to learn. And that learning, at any age, brings good feelings, and good results.

WHAT KINDS OF PROGRAM OPTIONS SHOULD WE CONSIDER?

Adult learning programs come in different sizes and shapes. They also come, as we have mentioned above, with different goals. After all, adult learners are all different. Different sorts of programs work for different kinds of people. In addition, you, the people think about starting an adult learning

program in your school, have different strengths, resources and skills. One option isn't the solution for every learner or every community.

The sorts of programs you may want to consider include:

■ *A Volunteer Tutoring Program.* This will involve developing a pool of trained tutors, who will then work on an individual basis with individual adult learners. (You may be inundated with requests to work with students from the school as well. You will need to decide if that is what you want to do. But, you should be aware that the requests for tutoring of school students, particularly at the elementary school level, are quite numerous.)

There are many organizations providing tutor training. See the Appendix section for more details. A call to the information and referral numbers will help you obtain the details about tutor training. You will however, need to recruit a pool of tutors. An initial group of about 20 will probably yield 15 trained tutors. The initial training, depending on the method selected, will take between 10 and 20 hours. A start-up of 15 tutor learner match-ups is a good beginning. Someone in the group will need to serve as the coordinator of the program. The coordinator will actually do the recruitment of both tutors and learners, coordinate the publicity for the program (designed to bring you recruits, but sensitive to issues of confidentiality), and then monitor progress. In most cases, tutors and learners will need to meet twice weekly, for about an hour to an hour and a half each time.

■ *An Adult Literacy Class.* Once again, this will involve the recruitment of learners. This always needs to be done in a sensitive fashion, acknowledging that often adults with limited reading skills are embarrassed or uncomfortable in coming forward to sign up for a program. We are all lifelong learners, and we all have individual strengths and skills.

Once you have decided to develop an adult basic skill class, connections with local community groups to help in the outreach process is critical. Church groups, community associations, and local political leadership will all be helpful in "getting out the word" about the program, and in enlisting volunteer assistance as well as in recruiting learners. Networking is an important part of program development.

A critical piece of this program option will be finding the right teacher, who can offer an exciting menu of learning choices to a small class (12-15) of adult learners, not all of whom will be at the same learning level.

Once again, a call to the local information and referral numbers will be helpful.

■ *A Family Literacy Program or Class.* Another option for you to consider is the creation of an educational enrichment program for third and fourth graders after school, followed by an hour of basic skills class for parents. The culmination of that program will involve an hour of parents and children working together on child defined learning projects.

This program option is a valuable asset to a school and to a community, but requires dedicated professional staff and considerable development time. It can not be executed by volunteers alone.

CONCLUSION

Reading and basic skill strengths are critical to success in today's complex world. Starting a school-based literacy program is a terrific idea. It also requires a commitment of human and fiscal resources. Just remember, it's complicated. It will require the work of a dedicated group of volunteers to get the program off the ground. You can do it! And, if you do, you will make a tremendous difference in people's lives.

Maggi Gaines is Executive Director of Baltimore Reads, Inc., a non-profit literacy organization in Baltimore.

STARTING AND MAINTAINING AN EFFECTIVE PARENT ORGANIZATION

Eddie M. Fentress

This chapter is for you, whether you want to:

- start an organization of parents from the ground up;
- breath new life into a parent group that isn't functioning well; or
- help an existing organization focus its efforts on problems that are important to you and other parents.

WORKING WITH THE OLD OR ESTABLISHING THE NEW?

How do you decide whether you want to work in an already established group at your school? Here are some questions you can ask yourself:

- Is the established group's purpose the same as yours?
- Is the group controlled by an individual or a clique?
- Is it run democratically?
- Do parents make the decisions?
- Does it respond to parents' concerns?
- Does it welcome new leadership?
- Is it possible to work within the existing group as a special committee?

The answers to these questions may point you toward beginning a new organization or working for a position of leadership in an existing organization.

Whether you start your own group or not, try not to antagonize or put down other parents or other groups. There can be many different roles for parents at any one school. And remember, you will need allies in the future.



STEP ONE - Talk to Other Parents.

Find out what parents at your school are concerned about and what they have done in the past. Find out who has been helpful to parents with problems. Find out what got in the way when others attempted to get parent activities started at your school.

It's a good idea to let school officials know about what you are trying to do. They may be able to give you some help. It will

be hard to get support -- from school officials or from other parents -- if your group keeps its activities secret.

Working openly and honestly with others does not mean you have to get anyone else's approval or permission for what your group is doing. Look for ways of working with school staff and the community. But keep voting rights and control of your organization in the hands of the parents themselves.

STEP TWO - Getting the Word Out

Get a small group together to discuss the things that concern you. This small group can then plan and call an open meeting to find out who else shares your concerns.

Ask your principal to send notices home with students. Hand out flyers to parents (and students) before and after school. Talk face to face with parents in your neighborhood. Begin early to establish a good communication network among parents -- a bulletin board, a phone tree, class parents, and a flyer/newsletter are good methods.

STEP THREE - Picking an Issue

The most important thing about your new (or renewed) parent organization is that other parents see that it is effective and working for children. Do worry about what school officials think, but at a later time. If you become a voice for parents, you will win their respect.

Pick an issue -- even if it's a small one -- where you can win a victory -- even if it's just a small victory. This will build confidence in your group. Let people

know how to get in touch with you.

Stay informed. Stay in touch with other parents. Stay optimistic. And keep at it. Some parents have seen too many groups come and go. Many will wait to see if you are serious before joining you. Stick to your guns even if the going gets tough.

CHOOSE A NAME & ESTABLISH A GOAL

Choose a name that is easy to say and remember -- and that expresses what your group is about. Writing down your goal will be important in keeping you on track in the future.

Find a meeting place, preferably a public one. Decide how your group is going to function. How often will you meet? Who will do what jobs? Don't make it any more complicated than it needs to be to accomplish your goals. But do make your meetings organized enough so that everyone who attends will be able to understand what's going on and take part.

OFFICERS?

At some point you may want to elect formal leadership. A **president** or **chairperson** calls and chairs meetings and keeps in touch with what's going on. A **secretary** keeps written records of your activity. If your group is going to collect money, you will need a **treasurer** to keep financial records.

Don't just give out empty titles. Your officers must be able to function. You might even want to select short-term leaders in the beginning -- or rotate leadership. This keeps things flexible,

helps you to develop leadership, and tests the commitment of your volunteers.

In the beginning, you can probably agree on informal meeting rules. As you grow, you may want to write more formal rules (bylaws), or incorporate, especially if you are involved in controversial issues or plan to do a lot of fundraising.

As you grow, you may want to consider affiliating with a larger group like the PTA as you grow. The main question to ask is: *Will it help us accomplish our goals?*

TAKING ACTION

A simple way to explain parent organizing is **DO SOMETHING AND ASK OTHER PARENTS TO JOIN YOU.**

Don't wait until you have a large, organized group until you do something. You will never have a group at all unless others see that you can accomplish something.

The four steps of any effective action are:

Fact Finding

Action Plan

Action

Evaluation.

Fact Finding. Find out what the problems, areas of concern, and needs are. Talk to other parents. Make a list. Select a problem your group wants to solve.

This problem should:

■ be urgent. Others should see that it needs solving.

■ unite parents. Avoid issues that are going to divide you.

■ be within the group's control. Some problems are just too large. Pick something your group can handle.

■ interest everyone in the group. Everyone needs to have a stake in the activity.

■ be appropriate for most people to work on. Discuss conflicts or problems honestly before you begin. Make certain that all members have some role to play.

■ be winnable. In the beginning, small, specific changes are better than harder, long-range ones.

Action Plan. What do you want changed? What do you want it changed to? When do you want it changed?

Avoid picking a goal that is too broad or vague. The school may be generally run down. You may not have supplies and materials. Parents may be unhappy with the curriculum. There may be a lack of communication between parents and teachers or parents and the principal. These are very broad concerns. You will need to identify some precise and specific goals. Without them, disagreements and confusion will side-track you.

Discuss different ways to solve the problem. Write down the specific things that must be done to solve it. Decide who will do them and when they will be done.

Action. The group and individuals carry out their specific tasks. Everyone should

follow the action plan that the group has agreed upon. If new ideas come up, meet and decide together what you will do next. Keep the whole group informed. This will prevent divisions in your ranks.

Evaluation. Evaluation is simply saying: What have we accomplished? What went well? What do we need to change? What do we need to do next? Each time you meet, discuss what you have done and plan your next steps.

Talking about how you are doing -- your successes and your mistakes -- helps to build a strong group. Evaluation and feedback will keep your group on track. Discussing little disagreements before they become big ones helps prevent splits in the group.

Evaluation can turn into the first fact finding step for the next phase of your plan. If you have kept other parents informed, have asked them to join you, and have developed jobs that they can do, your group will grow.

IN THE FUTURE

As you grow and become more experienced, you and your organization will want to learn more about:

- How to get information about what is going on in your school.
- How to understand what is happening in your school system.
- How to deal with school officials.
- How to run meetings.

■ How to train people and develop leadership.

■ How to raise funds.

The appendix of this book contains a lot of resources to help you with these issues.

ROADBLOCKS

A lot of things work against the establishment and maintenance of effective parent organizations. Be on guard for the warning signs:

Other Commitments. Parents have other commitments and all the emergency priorities that come with raising children. Be flexible and share responsibility. Different parents will be able to give different amounts of effort at different times.

Fear. Parents are afraid of reprisals against their children and may feel inadequate and intimidated in the face of school authorities. Remember, schools exist to serve children and school employees are public servants. Discuss fears openly and act as a group. There is safety in numbers, and use this fact to your best advantage.

Guilt. Parents are often blamed for school problems. This is often just an excuse for the schools' failure to teach the children. Some parents feel guilty and blame themselves if their children are having problems. Your group will want to work to SUPPORT, not to blame, parents.

Blame. "Blame" doesn't help if you are trying to accomplish something. The important thing is not to point fingers, but

to solve problems.

Everyone is responsible for his or her own actions. Your group is responsible for carrying out your own action plan. In the process you will learn who supports and who opposes you. If you stand around pointing fingers at roadblocks, you'll never get around them.

PARENT POWER!

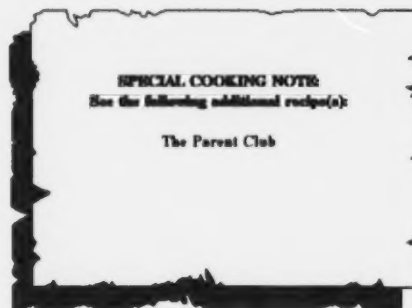
According to the National Committee for Citizens in Education:

Parent Power means that parents have a voice in the decisions affecting their children. (It does not mean running the schools or teaching classes. Principals and teachers are paid from public funds to do that).

Parent power means that parent organizations have the resources and opportunity to participate as equals in major decisions rather than being ignored or asked simply to rubber stamp decisions that have already been made by others. Parent power can be established through action by effectively organized groups of parents.

Discuss the meaning of Parent Power with your group. As parents, as taxpayers, and as concerned citizens, the establishment and continued well-being of your parent organization will have lasting benefits for the children. Good luck!

Much of the material used in this chapter was adapted with permission from **Parents Organizing to Improve Schools, a publication of the National Committee for Citizens in Education.*



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PARENT INVOLVEMENT: FAMILY NIGHT

Brenda G. Thomas

*First select a time and a date,
assuring one that it won't be too late.
Planning an evening with lots of fun,
Mustering the resources to get the job done.
A job complete, by our school family with a smile,
ready to launch with lots of style!
Decorating and preparing with faculty and parental
support,
A programme grand, too good to abort.
Food, games, music, reading and math--
what a delight,
We've pulled off another Grand Family Night!*

Many ideas are floating around in the minds of educators on how we can more effectively reach the parents and community of the students we teach. Should we make home visits, telephone calls, or invite them to the school to share ideas and concerns?

At our elementary school, the staff thought that a better bridge was needed to connect the home and the school. Communication between teachers and students is vital, and if the teacher has the support of the parent, the battle is half won. We surveyed the teachers and parents to find out what kinds of support teachers needed from parents, and what kinds of activities and support that parents needed from the school.

The results of our survey indicated that families needed to interact *together*. Although the components of the family

existed -- mother, father, and children -- the interaction did not. Our staff said *Let's fix it! Lets have a Family Night!* This would be an evening when the family at home would be a family at school, interacting and learning together. The following recipe will tell you how to plan a successful Family Night. Good Luck!

PLANNING

A good project derives from sound planning. We decided that our Family Night would have four segments of interaction: Dinner, Reading and Math, Music, and Physical Education. We wanted to feed families both physically and mentally.

Letters were sent to parents approximately three weeks before the event, with follow-up calls to confirm attendance. The letter was very upbeat, and emphasized the importance of family interaction.

■ **DINNER** - Dinner is a traditional component of family life, so we wanted to include this event at the school. Providing dinner at 5:30 allowed families to participate without disrupting their routine eating schedules. It also provided an incentive to participate, and participate as a family. The meal was prepared and served by our cafeteria staff.



While dinner is an ideal incentive that promotes family unity, your budget may preclude this activity. Other educational and family-oriented incentives may include free trips to cultural institutions, gift certificates for books, and other learning materials. Neighborhood businesses may be particularly helpful in this regard.

■ **READING & MATH** - We had two family nights during the year, and sponsored reading games at one and math games at the other. Games included "Wheel of Fortune," Tic-Tac-Toe (based on Hollywood Squares), and other fun, easy-to-play events.



At the conclusion of the segment (lasting twenty minutes), we provided each family with tips for helping their children in reading and math. The tips came from the teachers. Each teacher submitted 1-3 tips that would aid parents in reinforcing skills taught in class.

■ **MUSIC** - Sing-alongs and "name that tune" were used to get the families involved in an educational and recreational activity (lasting twenty minutes). In this manner, even those parents who felt ill-at-ease would have the opportunity to contribute to the family event.

■ **PHYSICAL EDUCATION** - Another twenty-minute segment consisting of volleyball and aerobics was provided, as well as a fifth grade basketball tournament. This exercise helped to educate parents about the need to spend leisure time with their kids in a meaningful and healthful way, and to demonstrate that



this kind of quality time can be a learning experience as well.

PLANNING DETAILS

♦ **TIMING** - A complete event should last less than two hours. We allotted forty minutes for dinner, and twenty minutes for each of three activities.

♦ **NUMBER OF FAMILIES** - We used the capacity of our cafeteria to determine the number of families that would be able to attend each family night. Invitations were sent to the entire school population. Positive responses were accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Those families that could not be accommodated at the first Family Night were automatically invited to the second event.

♦ **GROUPING OF FAMILIES** - As families entered the building, they were given color-coded tags. It was important to keep entire families together as they rotated through the various activities.

♦ **COORDINATION** - At the conclusion of dinner, the families were introduced to their Group Leader, who took them to different activities. Everyone left the event from their final segment.

♦ **FACULTY SUPPORT** - Each faculty member was given the opportunity to volunteer for the event by signing up to assist in an area of interest. Those who could not attend helped in other ways such as decorating, providing materials, and setting up the event.

♦ **BUDGET AND RESOURCES** - Our events were made possible through a mini-grant from our local public education

fund. Each family night cost approximately \$500, with food being the largest single expense. We also received support from our parent group and neighborhood church, business, and civic organizations. It is very important to seek these neighborhood sources; you may find a generous food establishment or a generous business donor right in your own back yard!

VARIATIONS

Your Family Night may vary considerably from ours, depending upon the needs and resources of your parents, teachers, students, and community. Other schools in our area provided entertainment for children while their parents were invited to dinner seminars on health, nutrition, and

drug-awareness. Another school held a series of successful father-son dinners that involved grandfathers, uncles, college students, and other male role models. The point is that any project that motivates, involves, and embraces the family unit as a positive force in student achievement is worth the time and effort.

Finally, while our project was initiated by teachers, it is an ideal parent, church or community group sponsored activity as well. Most teachers and administrators will be happy to collaborate with you on the academic content of a such an event.

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THE PARENT CLUB

Lucretia Coates

We know that many of our parents are available to assist and volunteer at school, but we only get the same two or three parents.

This statement is too familiar to too many schools. How do we get parents to volunteer at school? Voila! A **Parent Club**.

A Parent Club is *not* a formal Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A.) or Parent Teacher Organization (P.T.O.). It differs significantly from these types of groups in that the Parent Club focuses exclusively on *parent involvement* while the others are avenues for parents to be involved in more highly organized and comprehensive school policy and governance issues.

The Parent Club also differs from the PTA in that its primary purpose is to bring parents together in a non-threatening environment where they will feel accepted and welcome. In addition, the Parent Club serves as a confidence builder for those who are not yet comfortable in a leadership role.

The Parent Club does provide training for parents to be eventual leaders and active participants in the school's P.T.A./P.T.O. In schools that do not have formal parent associations, the Parent Club may be used as a first step in preparing parents to be future leaders.

This recipe may be initiated by the school administration, business partner, the community organization, or any combination thereof. Try this recipe to increase the number of parents actively involved in your school.

START WITH A SIMPLE SURVEY OF PARENTS

Find out how many parents are home during the school day and are willing to assist the school. Include questions about the days, hours, possible topics and areas of interest, and if they (the parent) would like to become members in a Parent Club. A simple "yes or no" survey will do.

The survey should also include avenues of participation for working parents. This would include telephone squads for events, paperwork, and other activities that can be performed at home, on weekends, and during evening hours.

If possible, follow up the survey with telephone calls. Low parent participation is often a sign that parents are intimidated by schools and school personnel. A friendly, personal call can go a long way in establishing the proper relationship with parents.



KEY INGREDIENTS

The main ingredients for this recipe are a meeting room, a group leader and, of course, the parents.

The most important ingredient for organizing a Parent Club is the leader/advisor. This individual is the link between home and school. She may be the parent liaison, the counselor, teacher, assistant principal or a community resource person. The advisor of the Parent Club must be available to meet with parents at least once a week or more as the need arises.

The leader/advisor is responsible for setting the tone (making parents feel at ease) and for the initial outreach for Parent Club members. This person must be sensitive to the differences in abilities, backgrounds and interests, and encourage all parents to be contributing members. The leader cannot dominate, but must be able to foster an atmosphere in which everyone feels vital and necessary. For subsequent meetings, the advisor serves as the contact person for teachers and staff.

The leader/advisor must continue to do follow-up after the group is established. Eventually, parent club members will assist in the recruiting of additional parents.

Another key player in the organization of a Parent Club is the school's principal. As the educational leader in the school, the principal is ultimately responsible for providing a role for parents. She assists where needed in promoting and supporting parent activities.

HOW TO GET PARENTS, PARENTS AND MORE PARENTS

Approximately three weeks before the first meeting, the advisor circulates flyers, bulletins, and posters announcing the formation of the Parent Club. These announcements should have a return portion that includes the name, address, and phone number of the parent (this will generate a file for follow-up).

In addition to written communications, the advisor should approach parents in the morning and afternoon as they are transporting their children to and from school. The leader should extend a personal invitation to them to come to the Parent Club meetings. This approach should be used throughout the school year.

Once the Parent Club meets, the main ingredient -- PARENTS -- takes control. They may select a name and club logo. Shortly thereafter, parents and students will begin to identify with the group's name. [One class at a local school had a fundraising project and were discussing where to donate the proceeds. A student suggested the Parent Club.]

One of the first agenda items and a major focus of the Parent Club is: *How can we, as a Parent Club, assist the school?* One club sponsored several activities that complemented classroom instruction such as an "African Food Tasting Party" during Black History Month. The members researched African foods, prepared the food, and served the dinner to students. In addition, the Club provided teachers with background information about the dishes, to be shared with the students.

At another school, several of the Parent Club members compiled an activity packet for all parents. The packet included parent-child activities for the month of February. Parent Club members at a third school wanted to assist the school with modifying behavior. They started a "Swap Shop" which allowed participation and provided incentives for students who displayed good behavior.

Parent activities will vary depending upon the needs of the school. One school raised funds for their school's After School Tutorial Program by having a penny drive. They also sponsored a Bake Sale to provide a Christmas Wish List for classroom materials and supplies.

Once parents are allowed to be active partners, they soon find many ways to the assist school. Teachers and other staff members soon connect to the Parent Club, and the possibilities for this group of parents are virtually limitless. In one school, teachers and staff solicited Parent Club members to be active in the school's volunteer parent-child reading program, assisted with the computer funding drive sponsored by a local food store, lobbied legislators at the state capital for increased education funding, and assisted teachers in the classroom.

Once parents feel that they are contributing and needed partners, they then become the Club's best recruiters.

OPERATING COSTS

Expenses of a Parent Club will vary depending upon the activities that the group embarks upon. Light refreshments are a real plus at meetings. Pot Luck

lunches are shared expenses by Club members. Fundraising activities are usually well supported by other parents, if they are made aware of how the proceeds will be used.

One Parent Club was supported by a grant from the local public education fund. Others have been sponsored by the school business partners, community associations, internal fundraising drives, and even school discretionary budgets.

Money will be needed for printing, refreshments, and some incentives. Parents of one club often reflect upon the thousands of pennies they rolled and wrapped at a Penny Drive that raised more than \$700 for some of the Club's activities.

HOW IS SUCCESS MEASURED?

In considering the success of your project, it will be important to make your goals realistic. Assess the present level of parent volunteers and build from there.

Perhaps the most important measure of success will be the increase in the number of parent volunteers. The project will also be successful if the Parent Club actually develops into a full fledged Parent-Teacher Organization. Above all, gauge the reaction of the classroom teachers: **Does parent participation result in student achievement gains? This is the bottom line!**

SPECIAL TIPS

*** Allow parents to volunteer in areas that make them comfortable.** Not all parents will want to assist or work directly with

children. Assisting in the office, cafeteria, health suite, and art room are viable options.

* **Make parents aware of school policies and regulations.** This will certainly make life as a volunteer easier.

* **Teachers, Be Aware!** Do not overtax parents who VOLUNTEER. Remember, they are not paid employees.

* **Provide opportunities for parents to receive training that will help them to be productive volunteers.** Most volunteer efforts that fail do so because the school does not provide guidance to those who dedicate their time. Don't let this happen to you! The leader/advisor must provide some guidelines and assistance for all volunteers.

* **Show parent volunteers that you appreciate their help.** "Thank you's" go a long way! Parent Appreciation Days are strongly suggested. These events should

be held in the early evening to facilitate the involvement of all volunteers.

* **Keep all parents informed of Parent Club activities.** Use the school newsletter and school bulletin boards as your media. Keeping a high profile will help you to draw new members.

* **Summarize Parent Club workshops and activities.** Distribute summaries of all activities to all parents through the school's newsletter. As you explore this recipe, the possibilities for increasing the number of parent volunteers and the ways they can assist the school will continue to expand.

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PARENTS' NIGHT

Carl S. Hyman

Most parents have two things in common: (1) they want the best for their kids; and (2) they love to eat. By combining these two unlikely yet highly related facts, you can increase parental involvement to levels you never thought possible! Sound interesting? READ ON!

PARENT and **INVOLVEMENT** are two of the most frequently used words in our never ending arsenal of school reform jargon. Depending on the type of community in which you teach or live, the involvement of parents in the educational process varies widely.

While it is common knowledge that many parents simply do not have the time or energy (or both) to volunteer in the classroom, many of them do read to their children at bedtime, prepare three nourishing meals a day, enforce homework rules, and engage in stimulating conversation. Despite their relative non-participation at school, these folks love their kids, and want the very best for them.

There is another kind of parent that may be familiar to you. This kind doesn't volunteer for anything, puts the kids to

bed late, supplies money for a morning breakfast of potato chips, and has the television playing 24 hours a day. Their children are frequently out of school and have poor achievement gains. Yet if you talk to these parents, they too love their kids and want a better life for them. *Unanimously.*

So, what's the catch? Obviously, many parents, particularly those in our urban centers, simply don't have the parenting skills that are necessary to promote effective learning. It appears, then, that providing parenting skills is an answer to the problem.

Unfortunately, many of these parents will not learn these skills any time soon. Why? In the vast majority of cases, these parents are intimidated and distrustful of the institution called "school." Their own personal experiences with poor grades, overbearing and out-of-touch teachers and administrators, lack of personal success and self-esteem in the classroom, racism, and other problems have left these parents as cold as ice. So it's not a question of *if* the parents need training -- it's *how* to approach them, regain their trust, and make them productive partners in the education of their youngsters.

The following recipe focuses on luring parents to a meeting with food and prizes, making them feel comfortable, and then quietly and effectively providing them with

information they need to know. In some central city schools, *Parents' Night* has raised attendance at grade level meetings by as much as 500% and has permanently improved parent participation.

This recipe focuses on the process of involving parents. The various skills that you decide to teach parents, such as nutrition, homework assistance, reading to children, etc. is a matter of discretion based upon the needs of the parents.

PARENTS' NIGHT: WHAT IS IT?

Parents' Night is simply a grade level meeting that takes place away from the school house. Parents are eager to attend, because they are personally invited to a "dinner meeting" in a locally recognized, non-threatening establishment such as a restaurant, social hall or house of worship. Child care is no problem, as the children have been invited to attend a full-length movie (with snack) back at the school. There is no charge for this service either. The parents will pick the kids up at the conclusion of the parent dinner. It's a deal that no sane parent would refuse: a free dinner and no child care costs!

HOW DOES IT WORK?

It's **6:00 p.m.** on the evening of the event. Per the instructions on the invitation sent over three weeks ago, parents are arriving at the school's auditorium/multipurpose room with their first graders (or other selected grade level) and other children. A neighborhood volunteer and three teachers are donating their evening at the school. Soon a snack will be served and a Disney movie will be shown. Older siblings are encouraged to do their

homework, while a few toddlers are whisked off to another playroom. The kids will be well attended for the next two hours. Parents are encouraged to "have a good time" at the dinner.

It's now **6:30 p.m.** At the church social hall a few blocks away, parents are arriving. They are greeted at the door by the principal and a cadre of first grade teachers, the parent worker, and the president of the parent group. Each is given a "raffle ticket," and informed that at 7:55 (five minutes before the end of the dinner) a drawing will be held for a variety of travel and entertainment passes. Parents are then assigned to a specific table where they will be joined by four or five other families and a teacher. When they arrive at the table, they will find a program for the evening as well as some important information from the teacher.

Dinner is served, buffet style, all you can eat. [More information on these procedures will be discussed below]. Teachers and other school personnel are engaging in casual conversation with parents, some of whom they are meeting for the first time. At about **6:50 p.m.**, the principal comes to the podium. He gives an enthusiastic thank-you to the parents, and recognizes the sponsors of the event. More importantly, he sets the tone for the evening by making parents feel comfortable. He may also point out the materials that were left on the parents' chairs, and how they may be used at home. He will also stress the importance of parental support in the classroom, so while the event is progressing, a sign-up sheet will be passed around. Parents are encouraged to keep eating and enjoy themselves.

Between 7:00 p.m. and 7:25 p.m., the event is in the hands of the classroom teachers, who are strategically placed in proximity to those parents of children for whom they are responsible. Their role is (1) to reinforce the friendly, caring tone of the event, and (2) begin a dialogue about the kids, their program, and how important the parents are to the school. While some of this dialogue occurs one-on-one (with the teacher moving about the table), much of it is conducted in a group setting. *The teachers always maintain control of the dialogue* so that parents will not digress from the issues at hand.

By 7:25 p.m., the parents are eating dessert, which has been delivered to the table so that the parents don't have an excuse to get up, smoke a cigarette, or leave the event prematurely. It's now time for the principal to introduce the featured "guest." The speaker, a pediatrician, speech-language pathologist, nutritionist, child psychologist, etc. will spend the next twenty minutes talking about a subject that the staff has deemed important for the parents to hear. For example, if the kids are coming to school with a belly full of popcorn and soda and appear tired every morning, a nutritionist would be a target speaker. *She delivers her message in a humorous, enjoyable, and easy-to-understand way that will make the parents learn something without feeling stupid or guilty.*

At 7:45 p.m., the guest speaker will entertain questions. She will remain after the event for additional questions.

Finally, at 7:55 p.m., a series of drawings will be held. Donated door prizes will be awarded to those who have a winning

ticket stub that was handed out at 6:30 p.m. Winners must be present to claim the prize.

At 8:00 p.m., it's time for the parents to return to the school to pick up their children.

A good (and educational) time is had by all!

The very next morning, beginning at 9:00 a.m., the parent worker, principal, and classroom teachers (as available) begin the process of calling every parent who attended the event. This reinforcement exercise assures that you will keep the momentum of parent participation.

INGREDIENTS YOU'LL NEED

Now that you know how this event works, there are several ingredients that you will need to make the event a success, and they'll have to be prepared in just the right way:

*** Business partners to donate facilities, food, prizes, and speaker.** You will need several. The first partner is the manager of the neighborhood social hall, church, or center where the event will be held. Most social halls are not booked up during the week, and the manager is sure to look kindly upon your project once he knows that you will be thanking him publicly in the school newsletter. Often, you will be able to "kill two birds with one stone" by approaching a caterer who also happens to own a meeting hall facility. You may be able to get the food donated!

Your next set of partners is the neighborhood mall merchant and small business establishment owner that can

help you with door prizes. Travel agencies, beauty salons, and restaurants are usually very receptive to one-time giveaways -- provided that you promise to publicize their generosity and business name to the parents. Word of door prizes such as bus trips to a local resort, a free dinner for two, and manicures at the local spa, will spread like wildfire among the parents, and will generate a high participation rate at the next dinner.

The third partner is the organization that's going to supply the speaker. Neighborhood hospitals, health clinics, health maintenance organizations, or health/education agencies are best bets. Make a frank deal with the organization: tell the business manager that the speaker is free to distribute materials promoting the hospital, clinic, etc. in exchange for financial support to purchase food and other essentials. The organization also would receive top billing as the "main sponsor" of the event.

*** Volunteers for hosting the parent dinner and for child care.** Volunteers are critically important for carrying off a successful parent dinner. The volunteers are ideally school parents who have children in the upper grades; it will be important for new parents to see that it's OK for parents to be involved in school activities.

Volunteers will be needed to set up the event, greet parents, help serve dinner, assist with distribution of materials, and other tasks. At the school, volunteers will be needed to assist with child care, snack time, and movie time.

*** Teachers.** Perhaps your most important ingredient will be the teachers. Ideally,

every teacher affiliated with the grade level that you are inviting to the dinner will be present. It will also be extremely helpful to invite special resource teachers (physical education, music, art, speech-language pathology, special education, etc.) to the meeting.

THE BUDGET

With business partners and corporate sponsors, the costs associated with the Parent Dinner will be minimal. For planning purposes, however, you should have a firm idea of what items will cost. In fact, your business partners will want to have some idea of their potential contribution to the event.

	<u>Costs</u>
Food	\$6-10 per person
Movie Rental	\$100-200
Stipends for	
Volunteers	\$10 per person
Rental of	
Facility	\$100

It's a good idea to divide the costs into lists, and target businesses for individual items. For example, the organization providing the speaker could be targeted for food. Your parent-teacher organization could be asked to provide the movie. Note that businesses will appreciate the school investing some money in the project. It demonstrates the value that the parent group and the school place on parent involvement.

It is very apparent that if you were paying for a Parent Dinner, it could easily cost \$1,000. This is why business partners are

so important!

For the items that will require a cash outlay, call around! Schools usually get very good breaks on prices.

EVALUATING THE PROJECT

While Parent Night may seem to be an expensive and time-consuming endeavor, the benefits of increased parent participation (and student achievement!) will be worth the investment. In order to assess the effectiveness of the program, you will want to look carefully at the following factors:

As a result of the parent dinner:

- ♦ did more parents attend grade level meetings and volunteer in the classroom?
- ♦ did you experience gains in student attendance and achievement?
- ♦ did you see improvements in areas for which special topics were discussed? For example, if the speaker was a nutritionist, did the kids come to school having eaten a nutritious breakfast after the parent meeting?
- ♦ do you now have more frequent contact with parents?

Even a cursory evaluation will require you to gather data on the above factors before you start the project. Concerned teachers will be interested in cooperating with the study.

IMPORTANT TIPS AND REMINDERS

- * **Follow up before and after the event.** In

education, *reinforcement* is everything. This certainly applies to the new relationship that you're going to start with your hard-to-reach parents.

Invitations to the Parent Dinner should be sent to parents **through the mail** at least three weeks before the event. Two weeks before the event, a call should be placed to each family by the teacher or parent worker. Be gentle but persistent. Emphasize the importance of the event, and mention the raffle.

The crucial period is after the event. Within one to five days after the dinner, **all** parents should be called. The teachers should stress how much they appreciated their attendance. The conversation should then move to more substantive issues regarding student achievement, attendance, special observations, and parent volunteering. It will be very effective for the teacher to begin the conversation with something nice to say about their child. It always works!

- * **Know your crowd.** When dealing with hard-to-reach parents, or those from social and economic backgrounds that differ from your own, make an extra effort to understand their frame of mind and reference with regard to schools and school personnel. Be patient. Treat them with respect and dignity.

Also, be mindful of the hidden messages that speakers may bring to your Parent Dinner. For example, it may be inappropriate for a White, upper-income nutritionist to lecture a group of lower income African-Americans on what constitutes a good breakfast for their children. This has less to do with race and

more to do with the issues of trust, communication styles, and comfort levels. Remember your goal is to begin better communication with parents.

*** Timing.** The Parent Dinner is not a long event. Don't waste time! Make every effort to stick to your time lines during the evening.

Know that parents, particularly those who are uncomfortable with the "scene" in which they are participating, will digress from the issues at hand. The locus of control must remain with the teacher, the principal, and the speaker.

*** Thank you's and publicity.** Don't forget to thank your sponsors profusely, both in

public and in writing. Publicize their generosity in your newsletters. Allow your speakers to promote their organization in exchange for their contributions. However, do make sure that your business sponsors are agreeable to publicity. Sometimes, "too much" publicity is unwanted.

When you complete your evaluation, send a copy to your sponsors. A successful project can generate another contribution!

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THE TODDLER FAIR:

Recruiting Neighborhood Kids to Neighborhood Schools

Rosemunde Smith

Are you involved in a situation where the local elementary school does not attract children from the neighborhood or is under-enrolled? If so, this recipe may be for you.

In many communities, schools are threatened with closure because of insufficient enrollment. This is caused by a variety of factors. For example, neighborhood parents who bypass good public schools for their kids often do so because they lack adequate information about the school or because they operate on faulty information. The objective of schools that are threatened in this manner must be to increase and maintain the student population. This idea may sound strange to many school administrators who have never had to consider recruitment as part of their duties. But it need not be a problem any longer. An exciting way to change attitudes about the neighborhood school, recruit students, and instill pride in the community, is to hold a **TODDLER FAIR**.

The Toddler Fair is simply a creative way to get parents and their pre-school kids into the school building for an afternoon of entertainment, education, and fun. What they don't know is that the real purpose of

the event is to get them comfortable and happy with your school! Getting them "in the door" is your first task. With the right combination of storytellers, clowns, mascots, medical screenings, and puppet shows -- plus some very prominent exhibits of your school's best facilities, teachers, and achievements -- your "secret" recruitment effort is sure to be a big success!



STEP 1: Gather The Ingredients

Before you begin, realize that a fair -- any fair -- can be a major undertaking. The first task is to gather all the people who will make it happen. Essential personnel are the school's principal, teachers (especially the pre-kindergarten and early childhood staff), parents, community organization representatives, and the school's community liaison worker, if available. Since organizing such an event requires detail work, make sure that you assemble a team of "workers."

Begin with a team brainstorming session. Before the real work begins, the team should agree and understand the following:

1. *Why are we having the fair?* Having fun and providing family entertainment will



certainly be an outcome of the event, but the **primary** purpose of the fair is to attract families and their pre-school children (ages 2-5) **into** your school building so that they will love the school and its teachers, feel comfortable, and **enroll** their child at the first available moment! Do not lose sight of this goal.

2. *What are our specific objectives?* Are there certain segments of the community that typically avoid enrolling in the school? Are you attempting to make the pre-kindergarten program an enrollment target, or the first grade? What types of programs do you feel that the community doesn't understand or appreciate? These and other questions should be discussed by the group while designing your plan.

3. *How will we know if we are successful?* Evaluating the program will be very important. One way to measure your success will be to collect information from participants on their impressions of the school after the fair, and track visitors to see if they actually enroll their children in the school.



STEP 2: Get Busy!

Now that you're in agreement about goals and outcomes, it's time to get to work. The fair is going to take about 3 or 4 months to plan. I suggest that you assign a committee person to each of the following tasks and needs:

A. **MONEY:** The fair is not free! Some money will be needed to print and mail invitations, rent some games, buy balloons, and pay the custodian. This is not to say that many of these items won't be

donated.

You won't know exactly how much you'll need until the other members of the committee report back to you with a list of needs. This is your first task. Figure that you will need at least \$500. Parent groups, neighborhood associations, local businesses, and small foundations are excellent sources of support.

Start with neighborhood-based businesses. Many of these businesses will gladly make contributions of prizes, refreshments, decorations, etc. in exchange for your displaying their name at the fair as a supporter of the school. Your committee should **offer** this type of advertising to any donor.

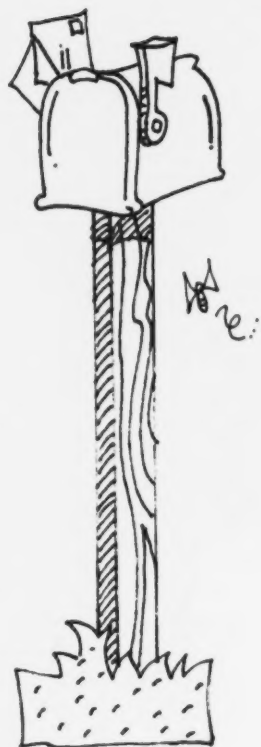
Don't overlook the value of volunteers! The more parents and teachers who donate their time, the less you'll have to spend on security and custodial support.

B. **PUBLICITY:** What good is a great idea if no one knows about it? Most importantly, what good is a Toddler Fair without ... toddlers?!

The primary object of the fair is to get as many preschoolers in the building as possible. One way to do this is by asking your committee to identify everybody they know in the school zone who has a 2 to 5 year old. Another way is to send a brochure in the mail to **every** household in the zone by bulk mail. The **best** way is to do both!

Using a bulk mailing can be very effective. Usually, you can get a local business to take your art work, print it, and mail it. [Mailing is best done by a local advertising

agency. The labels are fairly cheap, and your committee can save money by having a label pasting party]. Your brochures should have a return card attached. By asking the right questions, you will know who is coming to the fair. *More importantly, you will know who the toddlers are, how old they are, and how you can get in contact with their parents for further recruitment efforts!*



Start your publicity at least six weeks ahead of time. Don't overlook the value of hanging posters in libraries, the food store, and recreation centers. Church bulletins and neighborhood newspapers are a must.

C. THE SELL: How you plan to "sell" your school is the most critical aspect of planning the Toddler Fair. The group that plans this part will have the responsibility of making sure that your special guests -- the parents of the preschoolers -- will be impressed by the school's classrooms, teachers, academic program, and current student achievements. *And have fun at the same time!*

For example, many parents want to see that a school *places value* on things such

as high academic achievement, developmental differences in children, age-appropriate learning materials, and preventative health. You want them to leave your building and say *Hey, this school is really on the ball! I think I might reconsider!!*

D. THE ACTIVITIES: The most formidable task for the "Sell" committee is to identify all the activities and representatives that should be part of your fair, and disbursing them around the building in such a way that parents and kids must actually walk the whole building to see everything. A typical fair might look something like this:

Classrooms:

- Storytellers
- Magic Shows
- Child Care lectures by area doctors, hospitals

Cafeteria:

- Adult Food
- Kid Food (a must)

Health Suite:

- Baby changing table
- Volunteer Nurse

Gym:

- Vision Screening
- Dental Screening
- Book Booth
- Age Appropriate Toy Booth
- Scoliosis/Chiropractic Screening
- School System Curriculum Booth

Make sure that parents get an opportunity to actually see the learning environment in

which their children may be taught. If you are going to have story telling or a magic show at the fair, hold this activity in the kindergarten room. Let the parents see the types of mind-stimulating materials that you use in class. Let them see the science experiments, the computers, the art work, and the writing samples. Do it up. This is your best chance.

Along the same lines, use the auditorium to stage performances by your older students. Plays, skits, and *especially* student musical performances will make people take notice of what they can expect when **their** kids get older.

A little note about having changing tables and a box of diapers. The parents who use them will talk for weeks about how sensitive you were to their needs. They'll also be thinking about sending their child to your school! The bottom line is that the more detailed activities you provide, the more good will you will generate. Be creative!

The Physical Plant

Be prepared! If your building is in need of some minor repairs, cleaning, or bathroom fixtures, make sure that everything is in tiptop shape for the big event. The Physical Plant Department of your school system can be helpful here. Generally, they should be responsive to the need for a thorough cleaning a few days before the event -- especially if you're inviting the mayor, superintendent, and community dignitaries!!

Entertainment

Remember that this is billed as a *toddler*

fair, so plan to have entertainment and educational items that spark the interest of the very young *and* their young parents. Free entertainment is everywhere. Begin recruiting in your own school. You should also consider neighboring middle and high schools for dance, vocal, instrumental, and drama groups. Nearby recreation centers are often looking to display gymnastics and martial arts acts. But don't forget the city's baseball team mascot, the fire truck, and Officer Friendly.

Remember that children are the best entertainers. Schedule the entertainment to last throughout the day. Remember to schedule acts in the rooms that you want to highlight. Also remember that a number of short acts are better than one or two long ones because of the shorter attention span of younger children. Shorter acts also keep people moving around the building.

Other Guests

You will want to set up booths and tables for others who interact for or on behalf of children. Pediatricians, dentists, optometrists, children's toy/book sellers, and school experts (guidance, early childhood and other school system specialists) are a must. Your toddler parents want to see these people, and their presence shows that you care deeply about children.

Refreshments

If you choose to make refreshments available (strongly advised!) keep it simple. Show your commitment to toddlers by having healthy snacks among the choices. Consider milk and fruit juices,

fresh fruits,
vegetable sticks,
and sugarless
treats.



CAUTION! Don't let the fund-raising potential of refreshments distract your focus from other more important things that will require your time and energy.

The Little Things Mean A Lot!

As you plan, don't forget the little things. More often than not, people feel welcome or unwelcome because of them. Inviting practices include:

- signs throughout the fair to help direct traffic;
- a diaper changing area;
- supervised play areas;
- a rest station for the whole family (the cafeteria is ideal);
- a first aide station;
- friendly hosts and hostesses to answer questions (especially at the registration area at the front door or entrance);
- free souvenirs (pencils, balloons, key chains) as a constant reminder of the school. Those items stamped with the name of the school are especially desirable.



STEP 3: Test for "Doneness"

Evaluation

Your fair is not over when you've picked up the last piece of trash. You will want to know whether or not you reached your

intended audience, their impressions, and their willingness to consider your school for their children. Of course, the ultimate evaluation is the percentage of your targeted families that actually enroll in the school.

Have available a **short** evaluation form that can be completed as the families exit the fair. Be sure to provide a place to indicate if they wish more information about the school.

Follow up:

- Use your registration list to make follow-up calls to all families with toddlers. Hold a follow-up event, such as a tea, where smaller groups of parents can be engaged in a smaller and more intimate conversation with the school's teachers and administrators. Be persistent!
- Incorporate your toddler registration into your regular school mailings. Extend invitations to other school events such as plays, assemblies, and meetings. Invite interested parents to participate in school-community planning meetings.
- Seek out and be receptive to suggestions from would-be parents.

OVERCOOKING AND UNDERCOOKING: DO's and DON'Ts

To make the Toddler Fair a success, DO...

- ◆ Establish a regular meeting time for the fair committee, e.g., first and third Tuesdays from 4:30-6:30.
- ◆ Recognize the efforts of all contributors to the fair, especially your volunteers. A

separate event is a good idea.

♦ Restrict the number of goals to those which can be reasonably accomplished and evaluated by the committee.

♦ Allow ample time for printing, publicity, community reaction, grants, and recruitment. Remember, this is probably your biggest and best chance to make the right impression. Don't blow it!

♦ Be sure that someone has been specifically assigned to each task to be accomplished.

♦ Maintain your fair registration records (guest book, etc.) in good order.

♦ Try to recruit parents as part of the planning team. They are your best public relations people!

♦ Be flexible.

DON'T...

♦ Be afraid to modify ideas that aren't working. Nothing is so sacred that you can't let it go. Don't hold on so tightly that it alters the uniqueness of your fair.

Good luck!

Rosemunde Smith is Principal of the Federal Hill Elementary School in South Baltimore.

PROVIDING SUCCESSFUL SERVICE EXPERIENCES FOR COLLEGE INTERNS

James X. Bemby

As we emerge from the "Me Decade" of the 1980's and into the 1990's, the jury is still out on whether a new ethic of compassion and service to others will emerge in our nation, particularly on our college campuses.

Recent studies have shown that the majority of college and university students think that "being well-off financially" is "essential" or "very important" to them. Studies also show that while most college students believe that "helping others who are in difficulty" is essential, few believe that "participating in a community action program" is very important. These statistics seem to indicate that if a new ethic is emerging among college and university students, our future leaders may have some difficulty translating their thoughts into action.

Our nation's colleges and universities have a responsibility to nurture an ethic of compassion and public service by encouraging and supporting community action programs that will allow students to help others who are in need.

The "Me Decade" has aroused our concern, and calls for change are emanating from high places. Many of the calls have been addressed to our institutions of higher learning and their students. Prodded by prestigious reports such as *Higher Education and the American Resurgence* (1985), colleges and

universities are creating courses and programs that encourage students to use what they learn in the classroom to benefit others. The return for the student is greater understanding about individuals, groups, communities, and, perhaps, themselves. This new emphasis is flush with promise for innovative and stimulating involvement between the college or university, its product (students), and the community.

However, as with any worthy undertaking there are also risks. A fundamental risk is that involving students in programs that are not well planned can have the effect of turning students away from future involvement in service activities. Many campus volunteer/intern programs, eager to involve students, and already selecting from a limited pool, may tend to discount some vital concerns. The rest of this chapter will address some practical issues that need to be considered when involving college students in service activities, particularly at your school.

COORDINATION BETWEEN PROGRAMS

It is important that the college or university program coordinates its efforts with the school. Details such as monitoring and supervising the on-site activity, evaluating the student's performance (particularly if a grade is involved), and preparing and conducting the orientations, are just a few examples

of the details that must be addressed prior to recruiting the student.

TIME

Careful consideration must be given to the amount of time the intern will contribute to your school or community program. Well-meaning students can very easily commit themselves to blocks of time that quickly become unwieldy, as demands from their own classes increase.

With less funding available for financial aid, it is not unusual for students to hold part-time employment that requires 20 or more hours per week. These issues need to be discussed with students before they become involved in programs. It is best to turn down a student for your program before he or she becomes involved in the life of your program, or the life of another individual or organization.

Finally, well-intentioned students may not always be able to objectively assess their workloads, and therefore a structured interview prior to coming into a program can be very helpful.

ADDRESSING FEARS

Often, students feel a real sense of commitment and urgency to help those who are less fortunate than themselves. Their zeal is fueled by a host of elements including innocence, the popular media, the classroom (we hope), and personal experience. Often, however, they have never come into contact with the individuals, groups, organizations, or communities they most want to help.

Some are attuned to their lack of

knowledge, while others have never given the issue any thought at all. Many of the former are embarrassed to admit their innocence, while the latter blissfully believe their spirit will be all-conquering. It is crucial that you create an atmosphere that allows students to be honest about their fears, be they real or imagined. Typical questions include the following:

How safe is the neighborhood around the school?

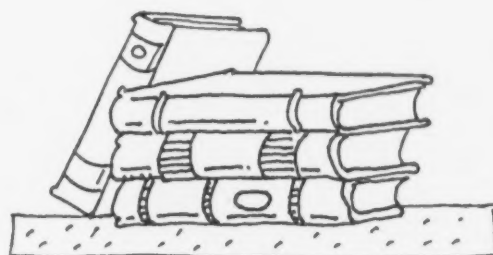
Will the kids like me?

Are there dangers working with a particular population?

Should I be an authority figure?

Should I share personal information about myself?

It is often helpful to do more in an orientation than simply encourage students to ask questions. It is also useful to make someone available to discuss issues that students might be concerned about privately (e.g., how safe is the neighborhood around the school). Finally, it is imperative that students' fears are responded to honestly.



ORIENTATION AND INITIAL TRAINING

All aspects of the orientation and training should be a collaborative effort between the college or university and the school. It is helpful to expose students to some type of orientation. While this does not have to be lengthy, it must give the student:

- * a clear idea what the program and its activities are all about;
- * the responsibilities a student will have and the time commitment necessary;
- * relevant information about the population the student will be working with.

One must distinguish *initial training* from *orientation and ongoing training* (see below). The purpose of the initial training is to prepare the student for the first few experiences in the service activity.

It is important that students feel prepared when they begin service to the school. Many students can be lost to programs if their first few contacts do not go well. These students will make a decision that the program will not be of benefit to them and participate in a half-hearted fashion, if not drop out altogether. It is important to give students as much structure as possible in this initial training so that they feel confident that they can carry out their beginning service activities.

ONGOING SUPERVISION AND ORIENTATION

Students should be provided with ongoing

supervision throughout their entire involvement in the program. A regular time should be made available when the student knows that someone will be available to answer their questions. It is helpful if students are required to submit an agenda of discussion topics prior to this meeting. Successful service experiences are more likely if students are provided with regular reinforcement through supervision.

Ongoing training takes place to expose the student to more advanced parts of the program, (i.e. training in more advanced tutoring methods) or to refine skills that students are gaining. Ongoing training is important so that students do not become bored or feel stagnant in the activities in which they are engaged.

RECOGNITION

Finally, whenever possible, students should be recognized for what they are doing or have accomplished. Forms of recognition do not have to be elaborate and may include certificates of appreciation or a lunch sponsored by the program.

Student interns can be vital to the health of a program and should never be taken for granted. Additionally, a successful first experience in service can lay the foundation for a lifetime engaged in service activities, and as such should be structured to nurture the volunteers of the future.

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VOLUNTEER LISTENER PROGRAM

Barbara Haxby

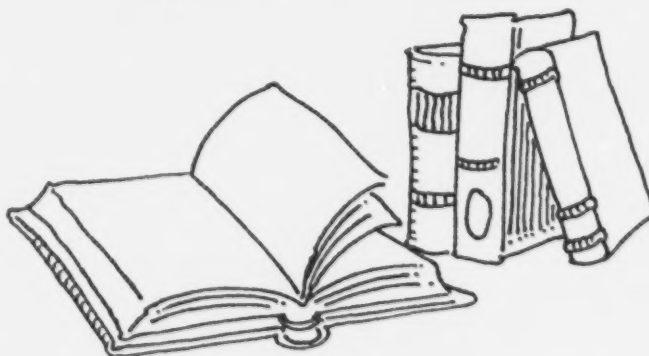
The Volunteer Listener Program is an easy but successful school-community project that's ideal for the first time volunteer as well as the seasoned, involved school parent. This recipe describes how to encourage parents and other interested persons in volunteering while providing motivation and practice for children in reading.

The Volunteer Listener Program is based on three basic premises. First, parents and other community volunteers are important in promoting academic achievement in children. Research shows that parent involvement in schools is highly correlated with student academic success. Second, children learn to read by reading. Kids need many opportunities to read in order to become proficient readers. In crowded classrooms, children do not often get the one-on-one practice they need. Some students never have the opportunity to practice at home. Third, children are more likely to practice and spend time doing something they feel good at, and about which they receive encouragement. The Volunteer Listener Program provides volunteers who are available to listen and celebrate reading success with students.

Volunteer listeners are *not* tutors. They just listen and provide enormous amounts of encouragement. Volunteer listeners are asked to donate at least one-half hour of their time per week. The reading level of the listener is not particularly important, since their job is to listen and then shower

the child with praise both for effort and progress.

Parents have been particularly enthusiastic about the program. It is easy to do and it is flexible. Parents and community volunteers can stop by whenever they have the time to participate. Students love the extra attention, and they benefit from seeing parents and school neighbors in the school building exhibiting interest in reading. Teachers see the program as a big help in solidifying reading gains as well as promoting general parent and community interest in the school.



IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM

1. Teachers identify students who have shown progress in reading.
2. The student is told that he has been selected for a reading award by the teacher. The best time to pull the student out of class for the award is listed on the award notice.
3. The teacher sends the Reader Awards

to the office and the awards are placed in the Volunteer Listener Box.

4. When volunteers come in they select an award, check the "best time" on the card, go to the appropriate classroom and take the child to the designated reading area.
5. The volunteer listens to the child read for fifteen minutes (less if a first grader or beginning reader).
6. After fifteen minutes, the volunteer congratulates the student and signs the Reader Award.
7. The child returns to class and returns the Reader Award to the teacher.

STEPS TO START THE PROGRAM

1. The principal or designated representative sends out a general letter to all parents and other members of the school community and sets a time for an orientation meeting.
2. A memorandum is sent to the school faculty, along with Reader Award forms and a start-up date for the program.
3. Create a Reader Award Box and place it in a prominent location in the office or parent room.
4. Designate an area for the volunteer listener to sit with the student. Some parent groups have decorated special reader chairs or have purchased rocking chairs for the students to sit in when they read.
5. Hold a training session for the volunteers in which the program is explained, and guidelines are covered. Role playing is a helpful training exercise; it is often difficult for listeners not to correct a child and to maintain a positive attitude if the child is having difficulty. Volunteers can review many different ways to say *good job* to a child.

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. All volunteers should sign in when they come to the office or designated area.
2. Volunteers are *not* tutors. If a child has difficulty, a volunteer should just give the child the word or allow him to skip the word. This is a chance for the child to show off what he *can* do -- not what he *can't*.
3. Even if a child is having difficulty, the volunteer must remain positive. A volunteer should comment on progress as well as perfection. Volunteer listener time is designed to provide practice and motivation. Children should view their time with the volunteer as a special reward for hard work.
4. Volunteer listeners are *volunteers*. Please make sure that they avoid buying things for the students.
5. Sometimes a child will tell a volunteer something about his or her family, or the volunteer may know the family of the student. It is important that volunteers keep this information confidential. Volunteers also should not discuss the progress of any student or share the information with others. If a volunteer has a particular concern about the student, the issue should be discussed with a school representative only.

FACULTY GUIDELINES

1. Teachers should make sure that a student has reading material ready for the volunteer listener.
2. The reading material selected should be something that the student has practiced or is able to read easily. This is a chance for the student to "show off" their progress, not work on their difficulties.
3. A teacher can and should select some

students who need more practice or who are having reading difficulties; however, these students should still view their selection as a reward. It is vital that students think they have been selected because of effort or progress rather than because they "need a lot of help." The Volunteer Listener Program is designed to provide motivation for students.

Schools that have implemented the Volunteer Listener Program have found the project to be appealing to both

children, volunteers, and faculty members. Children look forward to seeing their volunteer listener. Volunteers enjoy being able to inspire children to read. And most importantly, the program helps set a school-wide tone that reading is an exciting family and community affair.

Barbara Haxby is a Senior Family Support Specialist with the Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools.

READER AWARD

Name: _____

Teacher: _____

Date: _____ *Best Times:* _____

Volunteer Listener

SAMPLE READER AWARD

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Tru Ginsburg and Patty Pollard

The biggest mistake made by citizens concerned about their schools is to limit their supportive activity to within the school's walls or even within their own school system. Many education decisions, especially money ones, are made at the state legislative level. Increasing your school community's activities at the state level will reap many benefits for your school and have the side benefit of empowering your citizen community.

"DON'T FORGET" RULES:

■ ***You gave the legislator her job! She is working for you!*** Our first reaction is to be scared of elected officials. We think that our problems aren't important enough to merit discussion. This is not true! Elected officials recognize how important you are to them; you can vote them in or out of office. They want and need to hear from you; they will seek your attention and favor, especially if you live in their district.

■ ***You are an expert!*** Don't worry about knowing all the details of an issue, difficult funding formulas, or exact money amounts. What you have to offer the legislator are questions and information on how the recommended changes will affect your school and the children in the legislator's district. Many wonderful plans on paper don't work when put in practice. You can keep the legislator in touch with reality and give her concrete examples to use in promoting her, and hopefully your, position with fellow legislators. But always be honest with legislators, and admit it

when you don't know certain answers. No legislator wants to be embarrassed by passing on incorrect information.

■ ***You and four other people can change a legislator's position!*** Most legislators do not receive thousands or even hundreds of phone calls on most issues. One Maryland delegate noted that if she received five letters disagreeing with her on any issue, she reviewed her position. Another delegate carried an often folded handwritten letter in his jacket pocket that he pulled out whenever questioned about the "unusual for him" stand on a very controversial issue.

■ ***You should prepare for being an education advocate by practicing!*** Key to your group's effectiveness is role-playing or modeling at a meeting before the event. Just as children learn as much or more by actions rather than by words, so do we as adults. How often have you been asked to write a letter about an issue "when you get home" and you never do? The activities listed below build on practicing an activity in

The biggest mistake made by citizens concerned about their schools is to limit their supportive activity to within the school's walls or even within their particular school system.

a group setting with lots of support and praise. Like cutting the first piece of cake, action accelerates quickly after the initial

hesitation. Keep your husband's '60s tie for the parent/actor playing a legislator, the broken telephone for mock calls, and the mismatched stationery for letter writing at your next meeting. There's often much nervous laughter in the beginning, but soon everyone's sharing and offering advice, and particular skills and leadership qualities soon emerge.

BASIC LEGISLATIVE RECIPES

1. WRITING YOUR LEGISLATORS

Next time an important legislative issue arises, plan a "write in" at your next meeting. Many citizens are hesitant to write to their elected officials and find all sorts of excuses to avoid the task. Once they've done it the first time and received a response back from the elected official, they are often hooked, and become persuasive advocates for urging others to write.

The necessary ingredients:

- * a gathering of concerned people;
- * an issue to be addressed;
- * the names and addresses of elected officials (your local League of Women Voters or other community advocacy group will share a listing);
- * a sample letter with the correct greeting, either handed out or just sketched in outline form on the blackboard. Suggested address style:

The Honorable _____
Address _____
Salutation: Dear Senator/Delegate ____;

* writing paper and envelopes;

* a basket or hat for collecting the letters.

Announce to the group that their "exit" pass from the meeting will be a letter. A simple one-page, personal letter, limited to one issue, is all that is needed. Spend a few minutes reviewing the issue. Talk about the possible impact on your school, community, and children. The letters are not meant to be legal documents, but questions and concerns of individual citizens.

If individual letter writing is too intimidating for some, have small groups create letters together and then sign it jointly. Definitely keep to your word and collect all the letters in a hat or basket at the end, letting all share in the collective impact of all those "one letters"! Share the return mail from the legislators at the next meeting.

What a great habit for your group to start: letter writing! The more you do, the easier it becomes. Set aside 10 minutes out of every meeting. This doesn't have to be a letter of complaint or concern. Thank-you letters are very appreciated and remembered by elected officials who often feel that they only hear the bad news. If you've been writing, the next time you need your legislator in a crisis and want to schedule an appointment, you'll see her -- in a hurry!

2. CALLING YOUR LEGISLATORS

Telephone calls are very effective, especially close to voting time. Offices swamped with phone calls will definitely be noted by legislators.

The necessary ingredients:

- * a gathering of concerned citizens on an issue needing immediate attention;
- * telephones for role playing.

As in the first recipe, practice helps with initial hesitancy. Bring a telephone to the meeting announcing the phone call campaign. Have several people act out the call, with one person acting as the secretary or legislator, and the other the concerned citizen. Give as many people as possible a chance, and have the "legislators" take different positions on the issue-- supportive, against, and undecided on the issue. The practice will make the real call much easier.

Thank-you letters are very appreciated and remembered by elected officials who often feel that they only hear the bad news.

During a recent legislative push for more state funding for education, parent groups at certain Baltimore city schools urged each citizen who walked through the school house door to use the nearby public phone to call his legislators on the spot. A simple one-or-two-line message was written out with all the phone numbers noted. Some parent groups even provided money for the telephone call! At the next regular meeting many parents proudly announced that they had expanded the phone call effort with their relatives and other civic organizations. That first call makes the difference!

Most state houses have toll-free numbers, so citizens can call from throughout the state. Since legislators are often in meetings, be prepared to leave a brief message (usually with a staff person) stating your views on one issue. A "hot" issue might generate so many calls that a staff person will just keep count of who's for it and who's against it. Be ready to give your name and address, along with the name or number of the legislation if you know it. You can call any legislator, but you will have the most influence with those who represent you and those who are in a leadership role and/or are considering running for statewide office.

3. FACE-TO-FACE WITH LEGISLATORS

The best way to let your legislator know how you feel on an issue is by telling her face-to-face. You do this one-on-one at the shopping mall when the legislator is shaking hands and kissing babies, or at the local political fund-raising event. Or, you can be part of a group that travels to the state capital for a visit or that invites your legislators to a public meeting in your neighborhood after the legislative session.

Some schools, parent-teacher groups, councils, and other area-wide advocacy groups schedule yearly trips to the legislature and schedule public forums with elected officials. In the beginning, you might join a bus trip or co-sponsor a meeting with one of the more experienced groups. But no matter how you structure the "meeting," practice definitely helps calm the nerves and makes the best use of the too often limited time you have with your representatives.

The necessary ingredients:

- * an upcoming scheduled meeting with your legislators;
- * an advocate who is not necessarily involved in the same issue, but who has some first-hand experience and sense of "proper" political etiquette;
- * an obnoxious tie.

At your preparation meeting, briefly describe the details of the planned legislative activity. Make sure that everyone is clear on the time schedule, the

The best way to let your legislator know how you feel on an issue is by telling her face-to-face.

focus of the meeting (not a long shopping list), and expectations to be gained from the meeting. If there is a particular issue that you're advocating, give an overall briefing on the subject. Reassure the group that because the issue affects them, "they" are the experts and therefore the most qualified to speak up.

Identify beforehand a volunteer from the group who is either knowledgeable on the issue or an aspiring actor and ask him or her to role play the "legislator." The wild tie creates the first laugh, helps the legislator/actor get into the role, and generally breaks the ice as "citizens" greet and meet the "legislator."

Role play legislators for, against and undecided on the issue in order to prepare

for the wide range of real responses there will be in the actual meetings with real legislators.

There will be nervous laughter and hesitancy in the beginning, but this play acting works, involves everyone, and prepares all involved for the challenge ahead. Each small acting group learns from the other and skills are sharpened in a short period of time.

After each short skit, turn to the participants first, the legislator and the visitor(s), and then the audience of the moment and ask, "What worked? What didn't work? How would you act the next time?" After 20 minutes or so, refocus the group and together identify the most successful meeting strategies.

Plan your face-to-face encounter carefully. Unfulfilled expectations frustrate the best laid plans. If you're going to the state capital on the "everyone in the state's lobbying night" without a very firm appointment time, don't expect much, if any, face-to-face time with your legislators. That's not to say you shouldn't go; just recognize a different purpose is served by creating a large crowd, well identified with buttons, stickers and posters.

By setting realistic expectations for the meeting, you avoid such complaints as: "This is the last time I'm going to see them. This was a waste of my time!" Little chance of a good turnout on the next legislative activity and lots of unwarranted anger at the elected official will be counter-productive.

Many citizens think the only way to see their legislator is to go to the state capital.

That's not so, and the harried pace of the capital might not be the best place for a longer, less hectic conversation. Visit legislators in their local office. Invite your elected officials to your school to see your needs firsthand. They enjoy the chance to be visible in the community, and to know firsthand how they can help those who vote for them.

4. GOURMET LEGISLATIVE RECIPES

The basic recipes above are key to all advocacy activities and usually are enough in and of themselves. There are times and issues, however, that necessitate more intensive action.

Your school community decides that it wants to start a new program or to expand an existing one -- such as school readiness for four-year-olds, dropout prevention, or hands-on science. The primary responsibility for providing for and funding such endeavors usually lies with the state government -- the governor, the state department of education, local government and the legislature. You must therefore carry on a full-fledged legislative action campaign. Such a plan is a bit more comprehensive than the activities described above. The following is some "food for thought" on carrying out a legislative strategy.

NOTE: The following outline includes some key elements of the process. It is important that you consult with experienced advocates on your issue as you move along the path toward change. A clear definition of your goal, a recognition of the needs of the

school and school system, and a willingness to involve all the stakeholders in the issue or problem are all keys to your success.

*** Set a goal and publicize that goal in your community.**

*** Start your campaign early.** Get active before the education department sets its budget and before legislators have set their priorities.

*** Talk with the state education department about existing laws, programs, rules, budgets, and regulations.** They might be aware of studies that support your goal and other communities that are working for it. They may even consider your goal for their budget. Find out how their budget is developed.

*** Talk with the staff of the legislative committees that deal with education aid.** Look in the files for past action on this and related issues. Discover which legislators and which groups in the state have given support in the past. Also, look at the names and comments of the opposition to get ready to deal with their ideas.

*** Find a legislator (in both houses of the legislature, if possible) who will sponsor your bill.** Look for someone who serves on the appropriate committee. Consider their expertise on the issue, their position and respect in the legislature, and their interest in getting the bill passed.

*** Begin to draft a legislative proposal or bill, outlining all of the necessary points.** Consult your sponsors on the outline and together seek co-sponsors (statewide,

bipartisan). Plan a meeting with the bill drafters that is convenient for all who want to be there. Offer to talk with the staff who will write the fiscal review of the bill.

*** Build a "movement" behind your issue.** Gather together those regional and statewide groups you've learned about from the state department of education, the legislative files, and your sponsors.

*** Hold a summit conference with well-known speakers** to highlight support from the leaders in the business, higher education and political arenas. Have workshop participants come to a consensus on the details for your bill. Furnish them with materials so that they can go back to their communities and build support.

*** Develop a "cost-benefit analysis" on your proposal.** Focus your research on children, not on jurisdictions. What costs will be avoided if the proposal passes? What has been the experience in other states where it has passed?

*** Draw media attention to your issue.** Hold a press conference to announce your proposal. Write an opinion-editorial (or "op-ed") article about it. Meet with newspaper and television reporters and editors.

*** Offer to give briefings to legislative committees, caucuses and statewide organizations.** Encourage the organizations to endorse your bill, write letters to legislative committee members, and testify at hearings.

*** Meet with the education policy makers at the state level, including the state board**

of education and the state superintendent. Try to gain their support even if your issue will not be addressed in the budget.

*** Plan events that mobilize the community in support of the bill.** These events include -- but are not limited to -- rallies and education days at the state capital and receptions for legislators at your school.

*** Attend legislative committee hearings at the state capital.** It can make a difference when supporters are present to show, support, testify, and provide the committee with information on supporting organizations. Legislators like to be informed about issues. If you testify, they will help your cause by asking you questions that you want to answer!

*** Initiate a statewide letter-writing campaign to support your issue.** Supply stationery and sample messages, but encourage people to make them personal -- to tell legislators what passage of the bill will mean to them *personally*. Writers should identify the bill by name and number and specify what action they want their representative to take. The local League of Women Voters and similar organizations will have all the addresses and phone numbers needed for the effort.

*** Keep in touch with the primary sponsors of your bill.** Offer to help them by getting constituents to call, write and visit with other legislators who are undecided on the bill.

*** When the bill passes or fails, thank everyone.** Hopefully you attained your goal, but if not, recognize that change takes time and small steps are building

blocks for larger, long-term gains.

Remember, legislators need *you* to stay in office. If you are honest and a source of good, reliable information, legislators will seek a relationship with you and help you whenever possible. Your school and your children will only benefit when you enlist

these important elected officials in your efforts for education.

Tru Ginsburg and Patty Pollard are President and Vice-President of the Metropolitan Education Coalition, a Maryland education advocacy organization.

BEAUTIFYING YOUR SCHOOL

Carl S. Hyman

Did you ever drive by your community school and become overwhelmed by its lack of beauty? If so, you're not alone!

There are many reasons why schools look uninviting on the outside. The most obvious is that exterior maintenance is not a high priority for financially strapped school districts. In other cases, neglect is purely a symbol of other, more serious problems, namely the lack of school pride among parents, students, school faculty members, and nearby residents.

If you happen to live in a lovely community of tree-lined streets, trimmed lawns, and flowering shrubs, and one of these eyesores just happens to be near you, it can be not only distressing, but also a major detriment to the value of your home!

As a teacher, community leader, or interested volunteer, *you* can have a tremendous impact on your community by initiating a **school beautification project**. These programs not only make the school look better, but also have a positive impact on school pride (especially when the students are involved), and can enhance both the image of the school and the value of nearby residential property. Most importantly, by beautifying the school, you will have addressed one of the primary ingredients of "effective schools"--a clean, safe environment.

The following recipe will provide you with easy, step-by-step instructions for starting

a gardening project at your local school. It's recommended that you start with a simple, high impact project. While this recipe was used to re-landscape an entire side of a large school, it can be adapted for any size project, and for that matter, *any* beautification effort such as painting, decorating, or renovating. Best of all, you don't need *any* skills in gardening, landscaping, carpentry, or any other specific talent to do a first class job. But you do have to be **ORGANIZED!**

INGREDIENTS YOU'LL NEED

- * A planning committee
- * Student and community groups to do the planting and maintenance
- * Consultants in landscape architecture
- * Trees, shrubs and other gardening materials (rakes, shovels, hoes, water, hose, signs, trash cans)
- * A business partner

PLANNING

* **Timing.** Start planning your gardening project during the first semester of the school year and before the winter recess. This will give you plenty of lead time for a spring planting and dedication event.

* **Teaming.** Get a team together to share your initial ideas. This team will obviously include the school principal (who, by the way, is responsible for anything and *everything* that happens on the school grounds), the school's special activity coordinator, a representative of the

neighborhood association and/or gardening club, and representatives of other affected key groups. Parent and community volunteers also are especially useful to the project. You should, however, limit your planning group to no more than five to eight people.

Make sure that all key stakeholders are involved from the beginning. Key people who are left out of the process often have a habit of destroying your best intentions. Don't let this happen to you! Make sure that the faculty representative shares the plan with the faculty, the neighborhood volunteer shares the plan with the neighborhood association, etc.

* **Business Involvement.** Another potentially valuable supporter of your project is the *local community business partner*. The owner of the nearby shopping center, appliance or grocery store is the ideal candidate.

As will be discussed later under budgetary considerations, you may need to have some expenses underwritten, and neighborhood business partners may be willing to invest some resources in the project. Why? Because what's good for the school is good for the community; and what's good for the community *is good for the neighborhood business!* Use this logic when approaching the business. Offer the businessperson top billing in your promotional efforts. This is a small price to pay for financial support and good will!

* **Consensus Building.** The first task for the planning committee will be to establish a general consensus on why you're doing the project, and what type of results you want to achieve. The end result of this

effort should be a **Concept Plan**, a one-or-two- page document outlining why the project is needed, what specifically is being planned, when the project will be accomplished, who will do it, and an estimate of how much it will cost (see Budget section). Use the concept plan when describing the project to others.

* **Be Flexible!** When planning a large school landscaping project, keep in mind that "beauty" is only one of the considerations that will figure in the minds of the major stakeholders. As a community person, for example, you may think that the holly bush is the "perfect" shrub for the school. The school principal, on the other hand, knows that her middle schoolers will use the holly berries as "weapons," the shells of which will end up on the carpet in the media center. And the city horticulturist will object to this species on the basis of maintenance needs (watering, pruning, etc.). Be flexible. Understanding and incorporating the needs and concerns of the major players will make your project more successful.

* **Professional Assistance.** Seek the advice and services of a local "greenthumb" group (community garden club), or better yet, a local landscape architect. Or locate a parent or community resident that will provide free or *pro bono* services. You'll be surprised at how helpful they can be when it comes to selecting planting materials, planting times and locations, and other important aspects of the project. Many cities also have a non-profit landscape design center that will lend assistance. The agriculture department of the local college is also a good bet for helpful advice and services.

Consult with your school district's physical plant or horticulture department early on in the planning phase. There are two very good reasons to do this: (1) They may give you access to free planting materials; and (2) they are aware of building regulations and restrictions, including the location of gas and electric lines that, if mistakenly unearthed, could literally "blow up" your project (and your school).

• **Working with Students.** Beautification projects can yield tremendous benefits to students, particularly those in communities that do not have many trees and flowers. Gardening is educational, fun, good exercise, and provides a valuable community service experience. Involve students in all phases of the project!

In the best of all possible worlds, your school will offer a class in horticulture or botany. Use volunteer students from this class in the project. Have one student representative serve on the planning committee. Students can and should be used to help select materials, plant shrubs and maintain the garden. It is especially useful to engage those students who will remain in the school for more than one year. In middle school for example, start with a group of 6th and 7th graders.

If your school doesn't offer instruction in these subjects (most elementary and middle schools don't) then start a class! Get a community "greenthumb", professional landscaper or parent to volunteer in the science classroom a few times during the spring semester, or start a garden club. Focus on topics that will lead up to the big event. Get the principal's permission first.

WARNING! When you suggest that the students participate in the physical aspects of the planting project, someone is bound to suggest that they "can't" because of insurance liability, the risk of back injury, or because they will soil their \$70 tennis shoes. This, as they say in the gardening business, is *cow manure*! All that is usually required for student participation are (1) parental permission and (2) old clothing! If you're not sure, check with the principal.

IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT

Once plans are established, you will want to set a firm date for the actual planting, a firm rain date for the planting, and a date for a promotional event. [The purpose of this latter event is to show off the garden, thank everyone for their support, instill pride in the students and staff, and put the community on notice that beautification is important].

With these end dates in mind, work backward and establish a time line that includes essential implementation tasks. During the ensuing months, hold planning meetings as necessary. Your schedule might look like this:

December

- Assemble Planning Team.
- Develop and share Concept Plan.
- Consult with experts.
- "Cultivate" a business partner.

January

- Begin to prepare students in the classroom.
- Work with gardening groups and/or professionals, and municipal and school officials to produce a preliminary landscape design, including tree and shrub types, location, etc.
- Meet with neighborhood and school groups to explain project; secure commitments for summer

maintenance (see section below).

February

- Contact sources for materials and supplies and their cost. Seek donations (see Budget section, below).
- Meet with business partner, parent group, and other relevant parties to discuss costs; finalize financial arrangements.
- Finalize landscape design.

March, April

- Order materials and supplies.
- Arrange a meeting with volunteer gardeners and students to discuss the planting event. Have parents complete parental permission forms for students.
- Begin planning for the dedication event [Consult with the school's community relations committee or seek help from the school system's central office].

May

- One (1) or two (2) days before the planting event:
 - have trees, large shrubs, mulch, peat, and all tools delivered to the planting site. Prepare smaller materials (bulbs, etc.) for planting.
 - Measure trees to determine the width and depth of the planting area.
 - Stake out all planting areas according to the landscape plan.
 - Determine whether you will need the assistance of any earth moving equipment for larger tree plantings.
- HOLD PLANTING EVENT.
- Hold dedication event (optional).

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The most wonderful thing about beautification projects is that most services and materials can be donated free of charge. This is not to say, however, that the entire operation will be free. Landscaping jobs can range from \$500 for a moderately appointed flower garden to several thousand dollars for a larger project involving trees, grading and

signage, or the placement of signs to identify the site.

Again, when and where costs are incurred, it is highly recommended that you identify a business partner early on, and make this individual a regular member of your team. Many larger community institutions, such as hospitals, shopping centers, and other companies, also have landscaping capabilities and can be of tremendous assistance to you and your project. Check it out! Small grants also may be available from the community association or a community foundation.

Below is a list of expense categories, and some suggested cost saving measures:

Planting Materials. Trees are very expensive and can cost hundreds, even thousands, of dollars. Check with your city's horticulture division. Since the trees will be planted on city or town property, chances are you will be able to acquire them at no charge. Ditto for shrubs.

As for flowering bulbs, you can probably acquire them from a variety of donated sources. Many organizations will literally give them away, if you are willing to dig them up and store them in a dry place for the winter. This is an excellent classroom project for students in the fall semester.

You also will need large quantities of ground cover (mulch, peat, and other nutrients). Most cities and towns have ample quantities available for your use at no cost. These materials may be available to you from garden centers, but you may have to arrange for transport.

Tools. Hoes, rakes, shovels, hoses, wheel

barrows, trash bags, and marking stakes and ribbons are necessities. All can be donated or borrowed. Members of the team, particularly the school physical plant department and area neighbors, are excellent sources for tools.

DEDICATING YOUR GARDEN

"Hang a lantern" on your efforts by holding a dedication ceremony replete with balloons, students, neighborhood leaders, politicians and community activists. By doing so you will (a) send a clear message to your community about the important relationships among school, community, and business; (b) enhance school identification and pride among students and faculty; and (c) develop more clout by getting leaders and decision makers to your school.

The event should be held *after* the garden is completed. Send out invitations one month before the planned event, followed by a press release about 15 days later. Indicate that a "photo opportunity" will be available with the mayor and community business leaders. The neighborhood leadership, business people and elected officials should be sent personal letters encouraging them to attend.

The dedication should last no more than 30 minutes, followed by a reception inside the school. This is called "killing two birds with one stone": while they're there, offer the elected officials and business leaders a tour of your building. Allow members of the staff, administrators, and parents to meet and greet the leaders, network, and discuss the school and its aspirations. You can accomplish a lot with this type of approach!

Don't forget to follow up with personal thank you notes, and don't forget to remind your elected officials to make good on any promises they made to you while touring your building!

TIPS, FRILLS AND OTHER NECESSITIES WORTH REPEATING

Use Experts. If you believe in "learning by experience" then a gardening project is for you! Perhaps the most valuable lesson to be learned is *Trust and Use Experts!* This is especially true when it comes to landscaping design, selection of plant materials, and timing your project.

Avoid Pitfalls. *Never, never, underestimate the size of the holes that must be dug for trees.* The hole needed for an average bradford pear tree will take 3 middle schoolers and one adult at least 2-3 hours to dig! (ALWAYS expect rocks and other immovable objects in the soil). If this exercise seems a bit too taxing, you may try calling your local utility company. Most will be happy to "pre-dig" the site with the same equipment they use to erect utility poles.

Signs and Extra Touches. Gardens represent more than beauty and aesthetics. They also are tangible markers of school and community pride and civic responsibility and unity. Reward these attributes with a sign and fencing.

Call the city's sign shop -- you know, the ones that make all those street signs and special billboards. Tell them that you would like a pleasant looking sign that says something like this:



This type of sign speaks miles about commitment, pride, and future expectations of litter bugs. It will also make your business and community partners very happy!

You may want to trim your efforts with a small fence. Even a six inch rim around the garden sends a subliminal message to those who like to take shortcuts -- and to dog owners.

Maintenance - Your Key to Success or Failure. There is *absolutely nothing* worse than completing this type of project and returning six months later to discover that your garden is an overgrown trash dump. This problem is very common in projects of this type because maintenance plans are usually not given the priority that they deserve.

You must have a maintenance plan in place before you plant the garden. The plan must specify:

- **Who** will do the maintenance and **who** will provide the equipment. Will students do the watering and weeding until June? Who will pick up the summer months? The school custodian? The neighborhood association? **WHO?**

- **When** the tasks will be done. Like infants, newly planted trees and shrubs require meticulous care due to the shock of transport, and the placement of the root system in a new environment. Watering is critically important.

- **How** the responsible parties can get technical assistance when needed.

Finally, do make plans to locate a trash receptacle near the garden. This helps keep your garden litter free and sends more subliminal messages to litterbugs.

EVALUATE YOUR PROJECT

Finally, it's always useful to evaluate your project. Did you achieve your goals for the beautification effort? What were some of the more successful aspects? What did you learn that will help you improve the project the next time? Once you've answered these questions, it will be time to *do another beautification project!*

Carl Hyman is director of the Office of Project and Grant Management for the Baltimore City Public Schools and editor of the School-Community Cookbook.

GETTING MEDIA TO YOUR SCHOOL

Douglas J. Neilson

There is nothing more satisfying than picking up the newspaper, turning on the television, or radio, and seeing or hearing a positive story about your school, its staff, or the students. The impact of the story on the school will help to keep momentum moving forward, making all connected to the school proud of its accomplishments.

While some school stories will be told without the prodding or urging of the school, the school and its friends can help to generate positive news media coverage.

If your school district has a public information office, contact that office and make an appointment with them to discuss ways to get positive media coverage for your school. If your district does not have a public information office, you can still gain positive exposure. You may want to form a public relations committee to plan your school's strategies. In the end, getting the media to your school for positive coverage is a rewarding experience.

THE RECIPE

1/2 cup	Planning
2 tbsp	Press Releases
3/4 cup	Media Contact
1 tsp	Event

Mix together these ingredients carefully while noticing the quantities needed for success. Add a pinch of creativity, a dash of panache, or a little flavor. In the end, proper planning and the right approach to the media, your two biggest ingredients, will yield the most satisfying results!

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS (PR) COMMITTEE

Putting a public relations planning committee together for your school is the first step toward gaining positive coverage. You don't have to have PR experts on the committee, just dedicated staff, parents, and students who want to see their school receive the recognition it deserves. The committee will become the nucleus for working with the district public information office and with the media.

Have a member of the committee visit the library to study a few books on journalism and the art of writing news stories. This will provide you with some very basic information on how journalists work. After all, public relations is really just journalism or "reporting in reverse." Watch your local news broadcasts to get a feel for the stories they cover. Research the newspaper to find what type of education stories they normally cover. Now your committee is ready to begin its work, planning its first event to get media coverage.

PLANNING THE EVENT

The most important part of getting the media to your school for an event or activity is to make sure the planned event is a *real* event or activity, and not staged just to generate media coverage. A real event is a part of normal school life, something that would take place with or without the news media participation. A staged event is created just for the

reporters and cameras, but would not have happened unless the media was on hand. The exception to this is the news conference which is staged for the media to announce important information to the press.

What types of events might be considered in generating news coverage? There are as many as there are days of school each year. It might be an awards assembly to honor those students with perfect attendance as well as those who have greatly improved individual attendance. It might be a local politician or business leader trying out being "principal for a day." It might be an academic or athletic team which has reached a higher plateau, or a marked improvement in test scores. A list of potential ideas follows this recipe. Once the event has been selected, a lot of work remains to prepare for the press and the public participation in the event.

PREPARING THE PRESS RELEASE

Selection of the activity or event is important but can be for naught if planning and preparations for the media coverage is neglected or done with little or no enthusiasm. The first step is developing the *press release*, the main communications tool in publicizing your event.

The press release can be developed in several different formats, each geared to deliver your information to the various media outlets you will be working with for coverage. The key is to entice the press without giving away all of your plans or information. You want the press to cover your event and not just report from the press release.

The press release needs to contain the following information:

- ♦ **who** is involved (the school, students, businesses, or other key figures);
- ♦ **what** the event is (a press conference, awards assembly, class project, etc);
- ♦ **when** the event will take place (day and time);
- ♦ **where** the event will be held (school address and location within the school);
- ♦ **why** you have planned the event, and;
- ♦ **who** the press should contact for further information (name, phone, address).

There are as many different formats to follow as there are public relations agencies in major cities. No one format is better than another, as long as the basic information is contained in the release. A simple format might be as follows:

<i>Elm Street School</i> To Hold Fourth Grade Award Assembly	
WHO:	Students, teachers, and parents of the fourth grade Mayor William A. Smith Superintendent John Q. Jones Principal Mary White
WHAT:	Fourth grade awards assembly to honor those students who have shown significant increases in attendance and academic achievement.
WHEN:	Friday, May 5, 1992, at 10:00 a.m.
WHERE:	The Elm Street School Auditorium 123 West Elm Street Anytown, USA
WHY:	The fourth grade has had an overall improvement of three percent in attendance since last school year. Fifteen students have had perfect attendance this school year. Student test scores have also increased across the grade. Reading scores show the average fourth grader now reading at a sixth grade level.
CONTACT:	Principal Mary White at 555-1234

Other formats for press releases include:

- ♦ a **calendar listing**;

- ♦ a **shorter form** of the above style giving no detail -- just the basic who, what, when, and where;

- ♦ the **narrative**, which gives the same information as above but is written in paragraph style, almost like a news story; and

- ♦ the **detailed release**, which tells all the information in a narrative style, including quotes from the participants and all factual information. The detailed release can be prepared and given to the media at the event as well as sent or delivered to the media who are unable to attend the event. Many community or smaller newspapers prefer this style for it allows them to report on an event which they do not have staff to cover. You might also include black and white photographs with this release, but only if you can deliver them the same day as the event.

CONTACTING THE PRESS

Before you can expect to get the media to your school, you will need to notify them of the event. If your school district does not have a public information office which would distribute your press release, you will need to develop your own media mailing/contact list. In many areas, non-profit organizations, such as the United Way or the Chamber of Commerce, compile and sell media contact lists. This will provide the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all the newspapers, wire services, television, and radio stations in your area. You can compile your own list

using the telephone book or local library.

But before sending off your press release to the different media outlets, you will need to identify who at each news operation you want to send your release. You might know the names of specific reporters you want to contact, but for those news operations where you aren't sure who to notify, call the main switchboard and ask for the names of the education reporter, the managing editor, the assignment editor, or the metro editor. These people assign the reporters to cover daily news events. At the local wire services (Associated Press, United Press International, or Reuters), direct your release to the daybook editor.

The most important part of getting the media to your school for an event or activity is to make sure the planned event is a real event or activity, and not staged just to generate media coverage.

You should mail your press release at least ten days before the event. This allows for postal delays and provides the news media ample planning time. However, a day or two prior to the event you should call the media to remind them of the event.

The reminder phone call should be done as if no press release has ever been sent. Prepare a script of what you want to say. If you followed the suggested release above, all you need to do is reorganize it to flow conversationally. Present your information like an invitation, but don't try

to force the media to turnout for coverage. Often the more you push the media, the more turned off they will become toward your event. Also, don't ask if they have received your release, assume the person you are talking to has never heard of your event. This allows you to sell your story idea with a fresh approach.

THE EVENT

In planning your event, make sure to anticipate any last minute problems as well as requests you might receive from the media. Do the electrical outlets in the auditorium work? The television crews might need to plug in their lights. Is there enough room for the crews to set-up microphones and tripods? If you have prepared any charts or graphs to illustrate your points, are they ready for display, and have they been duplicated as 8 1/2 by 11 inch handouts?

The day before the event, walk through everything you have planned. Have a select group play the role of the media. If possible, enlist the aid of those in your community who have held press events. Their advice and insight can be a real boon in making your event successful.

FOLLOW-UP

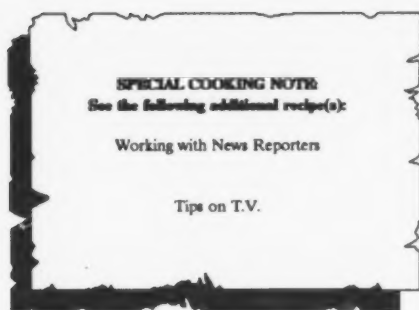
After your event is over, and you have distributed information to the media outlets that weren't able to attend, relax and enjoy the coverage. Don't be surprised if some of the stories take a different approach or angle from what you had planned, or even seem a little negative in their approach. Reporters like to make their stories different from all

other reporters. Try to review the coverage with an objective point of view. Is it really negative, or did it just point out some information you didn't want to have reported?

A few days after the event, the public relations committee should review what worked well, and what didn't. What can be done to get those things that slipped through the cracks caught next time? Once these things are reviewed, begin planning your next event. You are now veteran PR people, ready to get the media to your school again.

SAMPLE STORY IDEAS FOR YOUR SCHOOL

- ♦ Dedication of new additions
- ♦ Renaming of facilities (library, athletic fields, auditorium or even the entire school)
- ♦ Improved academic achievement (test scores, SAT's, functional tests or other academic measurements)
- ♦ New after school programs
- ♦ New adult programs
- ♦ New morning pre-school programs for latchkey students
- ♦ New after-school programs for latchkey children
- ♦ Dropout prevention programs
- ♦ Anti-drug/alcohol programs
- ♦ Attendance improvement initiatives
- ♦ Father/son breakfast
- ♦ Mother/daughter breakfast
- ♦ Teen pregnancy prevention programs
- ♦ New grants
- ♦ New partnerships with area businesses
- ♦ New partnerships with government agencies
- ♦ Award assemblies
- ♦ Open house or back to school night.



Douglas J. Neilson is a veteran TV news-person and former Director of Communications for the Baltimore City Public Schools.



MAKING YOUR SCHOOL AN INVITING PLACE

Douglas J. Neilson

Making your school office and other spaces in the school inviting places for students, parents, community leaders and others is just as important as, and often a reflection of, the actual integrity of the school's educational program. Making the school "user friendly" while maintaining a professional atmosphere is one of the most effective ways to enhance the image of your school. This recipe will help you get started.

DO AN INSPECTION OF THE OFFICE

Sometimes, the only room that a new or prospective parent sees is the office. First impressions can and will make lasting impressions! Making the office inviting takes work, but the resulting benefits will keep paying off for the school and the students.

First, look around the office. Inspect the premises as if you were about to clean and arrange your own home. Does the office seem inviting to parents and visitors who want to get more involved with the school and the students?

Is it organized and orderly, or is in need of a face lift? Are the guest chairs comfortable or do adults have to sit on chairs built for five-year-olds? Do the wall decorations provide a calming effect or are they old memos from the first day of school? Do school filing systems make the

office look businesslike or are confidential student records all over the place? Are there bugs or other crawling creatures about? Ask yourself these questions and relate them to your personal preferences about the impression you would want to make to others. Now, your work is cut out for you!

RECIPE

1 cup planning
2 tbsp elbow grease
2 tsp perspiration
1 cup community appeal

Place planning and research into a large mixing bowl and allow to set-up firmly. Add the remaining ingredients and mix by hand until benefits can be seen. Pour mixture into action for 180 school days. Repeat as often as needed to keep your school's image bright.

◆◆◆

PRELIMINARIES

Start by involving the school's principal. She is totally responsible for the building, and probably has preferences and needs for the office that you might not have considered, such as space and utility limitations (electrical, fire codes), security and access.

Before investing any time or money to make the office a warm and friendly place, it will be a good idea to visit businesses and offices in your community. Make note of what makes you comfortable and especially what turns you off. Look at the hallways, the foyer or lobby areas, and pay particular attention to the entrances. Visit other schools in the area, particularly those that have had success in parent involvement and volunteerism. Is there anything special about the physical appearance of these facilities? Note the bulletin boards and the cleanliness of the building. Is the paint peeling, or is there a fresh coat in the hallways?

Take your notes and begin planning your strategy to redesign your school within the limitations of your budget, and within the image you want to project.

THE FRONT DOOR

When you approach a store or office building, it is usually very clear as to which doorway is the main entrance. If you couldn't figure out how to get in, you'd probably leave, *and that's just how most people feel about schools!* Do visitors to your school know where your main entrance is located? While this question may seem a bit strange, so were many of the architects who designed schools in the 1970's!



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If the main entrance to your school is not obvious, you may want to consult with a landscape architect in the school district or in the neighborhood, and try to come up with a plan for moving traffic in the right direction.

Now that you've figured out where the front door is located, take a good hard look at the signs and other materials adorning the entrance. Do all the signs say *NO*-- no smoking, no late entry, no bicycles, no sitting on steps, no waiting, no trespassing, no loitering? How terribly inviting! Is there *anything* that people *can* do at this school? These signs are dreadful turn-offs, and are totally unnecessary. Instead, focus on positive messages:

The Elm Street School family is proud to offer a smoke-free, healthy learning environment. Thank you for supporting us!

These little touches say a lot about your school climate and make everybody feel a little more comfortable.

Keep the signs upbeat and positive, directing visitors to the main office area. Give clear, positive directions such as *Please visit the main office, room 103, third door on right.* Put signs on the other entrances directing visitors to the main entrance.

Work with your school's parents and business community to get volunteers, paint and other supplies and materials needed to clean-up, fix-up and put a fresh coat of paint on the doors and frames. Clean up all other entrances while you're at it. While they may not be open to visitors, they do make an impression on

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those who see them.

THE MAIN HALLWAY

Inside the main entrance, set up a visitors' table, where volunteers or school staff will greet visitors, sign them in, and direct them to the main office. This table not only provides the front line of friendly reception, but also provides security by screening visitors who enter without any real business with the school.

In the school hallways, place signs directing visitors to the main office and other key locations. Make sure the signs are readable, and that each message is clear. Again, the signs should be friendly, not authoritative. In some places, certain signs are required by law. Although these tend to be negative, they can be down played by using friendly signs in conjunction with them.

Depending on availability, you might try using color-coded lines painted on the walls or floor to assist visitors with their travels throughout the school. Yellow might be for the main office, green for the library, blue for the school infirmary, red for the auditorium. Paint these lines with directional arrows from the main entrance to the office, and from the main office to the other appropriate locations. Every 20 to 30 feet, within the painted line, paint in black or a contrasting color the name of the color code. Thus, if you were following the yellow line, every 20 feet or so it would read MAIN OFFICE. This can be helpful for students too, especially in elementary schools.

At the entrance to each office area (the main office, guidance counselors, health

suite, etc.), make sure the signs for these rooms are hung so they can be read easily from a distance.

THE OFFICE

Once the visitor has located the office area, your work really begins. Is the office orderly? Are there chairs where adults can sit comfortably while waiting to meet with you or other staff members? Is there anything on the walls to convey a message of business in a friendly fashion? Are the walls and floor area clean, or is the paint dull, peeling or chipped? Are the floors in good shape, all tiles in place, and is the carpet clean? Are the counter and office workers' areas clear, without stacks of paper cluttering space that might be needed for work?

If you have mailboxes in the main office for the teachers and staff, are the names clearly marked in a uniform fashion? If parents are dropping off something for their child's teacher, they should be able to quickly locate the proper mailbox. You might try to label the boxes so it gives more information than just the teacher's name, for example, Smith, Mary - Room 115 - 2nd Grade, or Green, David - French/Tennis Coach.

If you have a sitting area where parents or community people can rest while waiting, make sure there are current magazines or school publications available for them to read. Check with the central administration to get extra copies of documents which might be of interest to your guests. For example, school board rules and regulations, brochures on special programs, curriculum overviews, or other pertinent items. You might consider

placing a suggestion box here where parents and community visitors can make comments about the school's appearance, or to volunteer for school projects.

Make sure your staff offers your guests a beverage (coffee, tea, soda or water) and a copy of your school newsletter, school newspaper, or other informational items about your school. Even an angry parent who is coming in to discuss a suspension or expulsion will warm up to the school if they are treated with respect rather than as an inconvenience.

The principal's office will require a lot of thought and planning. This is the seat of school authority, yet it is where visitors should feel welcome and comfortable. Don't over decorate with expensive items, as the school is not a palace and the principal is not a dictator (at least officially!). But don't under decorate either.

Make the office comfortable yet businesslike. Furnishings should match as much as possible, or be covered, painted, stained, or arranged to appear as if they belong with each other. Make sure the lighting is bright enough to read by throughout the room, but not so bright that it highlights every flaw in the room.

If you have a computer in your office with a screen which can be easily read by your guests, program a welcoming message that includes the guest's name(s) or business, i.e., "Welcome to Cherry Lane Elementary Mrs. Jones!" Have a generic message available in case you don't know your visitor's name, or you are not sure of the spelling. Nothing is more embarrassing than to misspell your visitor's name.

Prepare a poster size list of your school's goals and hang these on the wall for the visitor to read. Refer to the goals in conversations and point out the poster. You might want to have the same goals available to hand out on a 8-1/2 x 11 inch sheet. Have available other important school information which might be useful for your visitors to take with them, such as a brochure about your school, maps of the building, lists of special programs and services, school lunch menus, information on your PTA or PTO, statistical information about the students, and any other items which are important to your school. These may include a school bumper sticker, buttons with the school motto on it, academic or athletic team schedules, and a school calendar of events. These handouts should be neatly arranged in a folder with your school's name on the front and your business card inside.

If you are meeting with a group larger than can comfortably be seated in your office, make sure you have a conference room nearby which reflects the same mood as your office. One wall might reflect students' work which is representative of the good things happening within your school. Again, have the goals displayed on the wall, and have an erasable work-board where discussion items can be outlined. Make sure the board is cleaned after each meeting. You don't want to leave information around for the wrong "eyes."

THE SCHOOL

There are many other things you can do around the school to make the atmosphere friendlier and brighter. Provide tours for parents and community

leaders who are interested in learning more about your school. Combine this with a monthly orientation for new students and parents to help them become more familiar with the courses and special programs you offer.

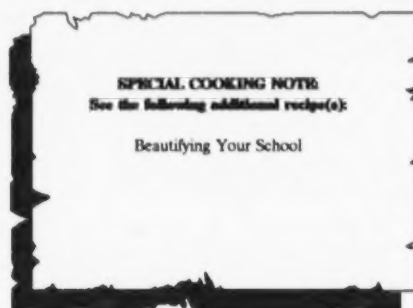
Post your office hours in the main office, and stick to them. Or, for a change of pace, notify parents that every Tuesday is "open office hours" day, when any parent can stop in without an appointment to meet with their child's principal. On this special day, have plenty of coffee, soda, and other beverages on hand, as well as light snack items, such as cookies or cupcakes.

There is no magic formula to making your school an attractive place. It will take the hard work and dedication of your staff, your parents, community and yourself to present your school in a pleasing fashion. Most importantly, by making the school a place open to the community by making it user-friendly, you will notice an improvement in the attitude of the teachers and staff, who will want to make their rooms a part of the school's positive image. Work with the staff in helping them to improve classroom conditions.

Just because a school may be resource poor doesn't mean that the school can't be

bright, friendly, and businesslike. You may be surprised at the assistance and donations you can get from the community to help you improve your image.

At the start of the school year, send a letter home with your students seeking the aid of their parents by either donating goods or materials, or the labor to fix up, repaint, and clean up their children's schoolhouse. Make this same appeal midyear when the wear-and-tear from the students and weather start to dull the finish. By inviting the parents to become involved in the school this way, you have opened the door to get them involved in all phases of the school's activities.



Douglas J. Neilson is a veteran TV newsperson and former Director of Communications for the Baltimore City Public Schools.

TIPS ON T.V.

Debbie Wright

So, your school or community is having an event, and you want to be on the T.V. evening news. What follows is a short and sweet recipe for the big event.

A T.V. news story is quite simple, and includes:

- 2 Cups Current Topic with Broad Interest
- 1 Cup Visuals
- 1 Tablespoon People in Favor of Your Topic
- 1 Tablespoon People Opposed to your Topic

Mix together with a dash of creativity and you end up with a T.V. news story, which usually runs all of one minute and thirty seconds long. (T.V. folks call them packages.)

Current Topic



Cooking up a T.V. news story requires a diverse combination of ingredients. The basic element is the topic. If it's supposed to be news, it must be current. If you want people to listen and watch, it must have broad-based interest.

Visuals

Unlike a newspaper or radio story, T.V. requires video. Static shots of people posing are fine for photo albums, but T.V.

visuals work best when there is natural movement in the shots. The key word here is **natural**, because staging events should be avoided at all costs.

People Affected

All journalists are taught to show both sides of an issue. So, unless the story is strictly a feature, expect the reporter to talk to someone who opposes your point of view.

Don't be offended. Understand that it's part of our business!

Words of Caution

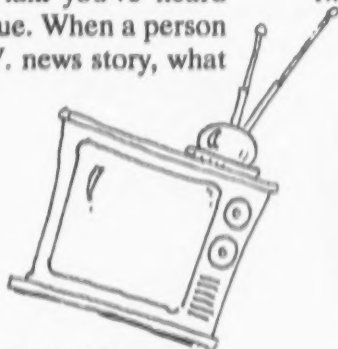
Please don't be surprised if the reporter and photographer shoot what seems like a ton of video and you see only two minutes of it on air. In fact, if you see two minutes of it on air, consider yourself lucky (SMILE!). That's longer than most T.V. news stories. The average T.V. news story is only ninety seconds long.

Unlike newspapers that have the option of adding more pages for the news, T.V. cannot expand the time given for a newscast. (Exceptions are breaking news stories of major significance.) Because of this, each story is only allotted a certain length of time.

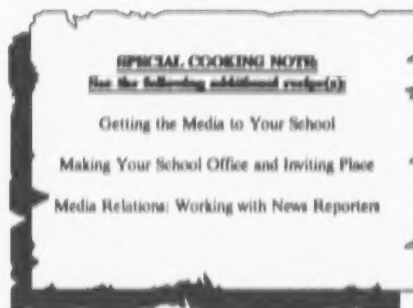
Extra video is sometimes shot despite this time crunch, because some reporters feel

that it's better to have video and not use it, rather than need it and not have it. In other words, reporters shoot all they need and then some, because the event can't be re-shot once they have left the scene.

Also, some of the talk you've heard about "sound bites" is true. When a person is interviewed for a T.V. news story, what is said will be edited down to what we call a **sound bite**. Depending on the reporter, a "bite" can be as short as one word. The average sound bite is about 15 seconds. Again, this is the nature of the T.V. time clock.



that goes like this: "There are no boring stories, only boring reporters." Meaning, all good reporters look for an unusual angle, or a different way of telling a story. That's part of our job, but it helps if the event we're covering has an interesting twist all its own.



Creativity

There is a saying we journalists use

Debbie Wright is a T.V. news reporter for WJZ-TV in Baltimore.



ENCOURAGING OUTSIDE READING

Matthew Joseph

Too often, too many students spend too much of their afternoons, evenings, weekends, and summers watching television. Instead, they could be reading for pleasure. As a school community, you can help tilt the balance in favor of reading by developing a plan to promote outside reading -- that is, reading for pleasure *outside* of school. As a result, your children will not only learn to love to read, they will also become better readers. As with many things, practice makes perfect!

INGREDIENTS

♦ **Incentives.** Use creative strategies and devices to encourage students to read. You might play upon student pride and healthy competition (e.g., sashes with buttons). Mix completely fun prizes (e.g., pizza parties) with more serious prizes (e.g., books). Reward top reading individuals and classes. Search the community for businesses that will donate awards. Take advantage of existing programs--Pizza Hut's "Book-It," Reading Is Fundamental, the Baltimore Orioles' "Read Like A Pro," and World Book's "Partners In Excellence."

♦ **Motivational Activities.** Plan kick-off and end-of-year ceremonies with the entire school if possible. Think of ongoing ways to maintain enthusiasm, such as weekly



"Read-Ins," visits to the local library, visits by authors, monthly awards assemblies, intercom readings, theme-song competitions, and after-school book clubs. Maintain a high profile for the effort in the school through hallway and classroom displays.

♦ **Books.** Make sure the library has enough interesting books for students to read. If not, raise money to buy books, get community members to donate books, or try to borrow books from the local public libraries. Give children a choice of books but make sure they pick challenging ones. Reward students who read particularly long books. Sometimes, have the groups of students read the same or similar books and talk about them (e.g., biographies).

♦ **Validation.** Before giving out rewards and incentives, some attempt should be made to verify that students are reading the books they claim, without creating a mountain of paperwork or turning off the children. Brief, fun book reports or oral presentations can be used to accomplish this. At the primary level, the children can create drawings of the characters or the story.

♦ **A Goal.** Perhaps the school should establish an overall total number of books that it wants the students to read for the year. Some form of group incentive should be offered (e.g., a school trip). Or, the principal might offer to sit on the roof for the day or sit in a dunking booth.

♦ **A Requirement.** For students and parents to take outside reading seriously, a minimum per month requirement should be considered. Students failing to reach that level could be marked down on their report cards, similar to failure to complete homework or do well on a test.

♦ **Peer Help.** Children who are proving to be reluctant outside readers should receive special attention. One powerful strategy is to assign to them other students who will provide encouragement. The peer helper might be a classmate who chooses to read the same book. Or it might be an older student who receives an incentive for every book the younger student is encouraged to read.

♦ **Working With Your Local Library.** Libraries and librarians can be an endless source of books, motivational activities, and ideas.

♦ **Summer Reading.** Remember, outside reading should occur beyond the school year. Encourage students to participate in any and all special summer reading programs offered by your school district by facilitating sign up and having follow-up activities in the fall.

BAKING INSTRUCTIONS

Assemble a committee of parents, teachers, the librarian, the principal, community members, and students (if appropriate), to develop an outside reading plan which addresses the above issues and any others you can think of. Divide responsibilities between the committee members and other volunteers. Keep track of results through classroom and school reading logs, and plan for improvement year after year.

Matthew Joseph is a former program officer for the Abell Foundation in Baltimore.

MENTORING

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

Ralph E. Moore, Jr.

Mentoring can be a lot of hard work. But it also can be fun. This recipe is designed to help you with the mentoring process. Use it for information, ideas, and perhaps even for a little inspiration.

Since mentoring is becoming an increasingly widespread technique, especially for working with youth, there is much already written about the subject. References to materials from other sources are noted in both the text and the reference section of the Cookbook.

WHAT THE HECK IS MENTORING, ANYWAY?

The origins of mentoring in world history are not exactly clear. Most tend to think that the recipe goes back to ancient, maybe even prehistoric times. But in the absence of the cave mentor's own words, a more recent definition is offered:

MENTORING is a one-to-one relationship over a prolonged period of time between a youth and an adult who provides consistent support, guidance, and concrete help as the younger person goes through a difficult or challenging situation or period in life.

The goal of mentoring is to help youngsters gain the skills and confidence to be responsible for their own futures including, and with increasing emphasis on, academic and occupational skills.

THE ROLE OF MENTORS

Mentors usually play some or all of the

following roles in their relationship with their mentees (i.e., those being mentored). The roles are giving academic support, building self-esteem, acting as a role model, paying attention to the special needs of the mentee, showing concern, being reliable, and helping to set goals.

Academic support is the cornerstone of many mentoring projects. Often the aim of the program is to ensure that the mentees complete high school and move on to college or some other worthwhile post-secondary educational endeavor. Students cannot succeed without strong encouragement to do well in school. Therefore, the academic support role is a key element in most effective mentoring programs.

Building positive self-esteem is an important way to encourage student success. Just as low self-esteem leads to low performance, a bolstered self worth can help students achieve better grades, attend school regularly, participate in extra-curricular activities and ultimately

complete their education. Improving the value of self for many students is a difficult, ongoing process.

Acting as a role model is also very significant. Once there is trust in the mentor-mentee relationship, mentees look to their older partners for guidance. The mentor's outlook on life, and the way he expresses himself, can come under scrutiny by the younger, less experienced, and impressionable mentee. Be yourself, but be careful to understand the differences in sophistication and experience between you and the mentee.

Bill Cosby, in his book, *Fatherhood*, wrote "The four most important words parents should know are: attention must be paid." Knowing these words also is very useful to mentors. Many mentees, because they are "at risk of failure," need more attention to be able to succeed. Needless to say (but said anyway!), sharpened looking and listening skills are important for fulfilling the attention-paying role.

Showing concern is directly related to paying attention. But discerning is very important when trying to play the role of the concerned mentor. That old prayer comes to mind, "Give me the courage to change the things that I can, the strength to accept the things I cannot change, and the wisdom to know the difference." Care and concern is best expressed not by what material things you give him or her but by your being there for your mentee.

Being reliable is pretty self-explanatory. The mentoring relationship does not work unless there is consistency. Consistency leads to reliability, which in turn leads to trust and then progress in the mentoring

relationship. When planned meetings must be canceled, communication with the mentee is very important. Great effort must be taken not to miss mentoring meetings.

And finally, goal setting, helping the mentee to set achievable goals and attain them, is a vehicle for building trust between mentor and mentee. It also helps improve self esteem in the mentee.

Mentors who understand their role and work hard at fulfilling it have a better chance of success with their mentees. If mentors are not really trying to make the relationship work, mentees will know it, not take the situation seriously, and consequently not participate.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MENTEE

Knowing a mentee requires knowing his or her particular stage of psycho-social development. Adolescents, for example, undergo rapid growth physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially.

Such evolution creates a very difficult and demanding transitional period for the young person and most everyone traveling in his or her path. Often, the adolescent's strong desire for change clashes with resistance to change perceived to be coming from the direction of authority figures--parents, teachers, etc.

Keep in mind that during adolescence, peers are far more important than adults to persons in that stage of development. Adolescents are looking for more and more independence from their parents. They are trying to figure out who they are. So don't take what appears to be their

self-centeredness too seriously.

Always remember, adolescents are wandering in the desert. One day, perhaps with your help, they will find their way out. So relax and enjoy your view from the hot air balloon above.

STAGES OF THE MENTOR-MENTEE RELATIONSHIP

According to the Abell Foundation's manual, *The Two of Us*, there are three typical stages the mentor-mentee relationship goes through. They are: Stage I: The Beginning--Developing Rapport and Building Trust; Stage II: The Middle--Reaching Goals; and Stage III: Terminating the Relationship.

For more detail and further information, read the book. Here are some highlights from the chapter on stages in the mentor-mentee relationship:

During Stage I, it is very important to build trust. The manual says, "One of the best ways to build trust is to help mentees accomplish something that is important to them."

During the first stage, "testing" of the mentor may occur, with the mentee missing appointments, not returning phone calls, making unreasonable requests and at times being angry or sullen.

In Stage I, the mentee is looking for consistency from the mentor. The mentee is also looking to see if she or he can trust the mentor, so confidentiality of feelings and disclosures between parties is very

significant. If the mentor feels he or she is told something that needs the involvement of another adult, he/she should discuss it with the mentee first. Only the fear of physical harm should prompt a mentor to break confidentiality without the mentee's knowledge beforehand.

Stage II is the time of closeness in the relationship. Each mentor-mentee relationship is unique. It can be rather family-like or more formal in nature. Contacts can be either frequent or limited to once a week. Do not expect smooth sailing consistently throughout this stage of the relationship.

Finally, Stage III: Terminating. Please discuss this very important phase of the mentor-mentee relationship with the project's student advocate before disconnecting. Try to sustain the relationship for a year.

HELP!

Use your imagination to plan comfortable, enjoyable activities for you and your mentee. Even the most creative persons get stuck for ideas every once in a while. So, in case you ever need it, here is a list of suggested activities to help promote a positive mentor/mentee relationship:

- * Share a homework assignment.
- * Discuss how best to study for a test, including how to take notes.
- * Discuss current events.
- * Visit a local college or university.
- * Take a nice walk.
- * Visit a museum.
- * Browse in a bookstore that has a

- strong section for young persons.
- * Arrange for and take a tour of a TV or radio station.
 - * Do a family tree.
 - * Organize family photographs.
 - * Plant a few seeds and watch their progress.
 - * Tape record interesting sounds of the city.
 - * Visit a senior citizen center and inquire of an elderly person their memories of an historical event.
 - * Take in a City or Town Council meeting and then meet your representatives.
 - * Start learning to read a map.

If you want more **suggestions**, be sure to ask your mentee and others who are involved in your local program!

DO'S AND DON'T'S

- * A parent's permission should be obtained before plans are finalized for taking the mentee somewhere. Also, the parent should know approximately when the child will return. It is important that this schedule be followed.
- * A good rule concerning the mentee's home is enter, be courteous, and leave as soon as possible. This is to focus your involvement on the mentee.
- * It is important that you never betray or appear to betray the confidence your mentee has shown in you, so never talk to family members of the family without your mentee being present.
- * The mentor should not regularly include other members of the mentee's family in

their activities. You are in a relationship between mentor and mentee.

- * Mentors are not expected to provide funds for either the family or the mentee. It is unwise to do so because it makes the mentee and his/her family charity conscious.

- * Do not leave the mentee up in the air. Let him or her know when your next meeting will be. Make a definite appointment each time.

- * Keep your appointments and keep them on time. Reliability is important in the relationship.

- * Do not make promises that you don't intend to keep. A broken promise is a grave disappointment.

- * Do not expect the mentee to call you by phone regularly or to be talkative and responsive over the phone.

- * Plan activities jointly with your mentee.

- * Don't try to mold your mentee into the image you want him or her to be. Respect the individuality of the mentee.

- * If you are involved in a program that has a student advocate or director, notify this person of any problems, however trivial they may seem.

WHAT DO YOU DO?: SOME SITUATIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What do you do if your mentee, or a member of his/her family asks you for money for an "emergency?"

What do you say if you smell alcohol on your mentee's breath when you meet him a half hour after school ends?

What do you say and do if your mentee tells you that she thinks she's pregnant?

What you do say if your mentee confides he's planning to hurt one of his classmates "real bad?"

You may encounter the kinds of situations described above and you may not. Although our mentees are "at risk" youth, most of them are your average, everyday underachieving kids.

If you are faced with a complicated situation, first of all, *use common sense to figure out what you should do*. And when in doubt, consult your mentee's program coordinator. He or she is very likely to know what's going on with the student. And if the school-based advocate is not aware of the situation, he or she is in a better position to get to the bottom of it.

Know how to contact your mentee's parents, the program coordinator, and his or her school administrators. Know the limits of your personal and corporate legal responsibilities.

Ralph E. Moore, Jr. is director of RAISE II, a mentoring program in Baltimore, Maryland.

Acknowledgements

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The author also wishes to acknowledge the Baltimore Mentoring Institute and the Fund for Educational Excellence for their efforts in establishing leadership for mentoring programs in Baltimore.

TEACHERS INVOLVE PARENTS IN SCHOOLWORK (TIPS): Involving Families to Improve Student Achievement*

Joyce L. Epstein

Research shows that parent involvement improves student achievement, attitudes toward school, homework completion, report card grades, and children's aspirations for the future. Surveys of parents show that most families want to help guide their children through school, but they say they need more information from the schools about how to help their children at home.

*Studies also show that when teachers guide interaction, more parents become involved in ways that benefit their children. A process has been developed that enables teachers to do this easily: **TIPS -- Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork**. There are two TIPS processes -- one that increases parent involvement at home on interactive homework assignments, and one that increases parent involvement at school as volunteers.*

While this project is designed as one to be implemented by teachers, it can, and certainly should, be promoted by parent groups, administrators, and community activists. The TIPS method is one example of the many creative ways to link the school and the family to improve student achievement.

**FAMILY INVOLVEMENT
AT HOME:
TIPS INTERACTIVE HOMEWORK IN
MATH, SCIENCE & HEALTH, AND
LANGUAGE ARTS**

Of all types of involvement, the one that most parents want to know about is: **How can I help my child at home?** This most wanted involvement is one that most schools have had difficulty organizing. It requires every teacher at every grade level to communicate with families about how to work and interact with their children on learning at home.

To meet this need, teachers helped to design, implement, and test **TIPS Interactive Homework**. With TIPS, any teacher can help families stay informed and involved in their children's learning activities at home.

TIPS activities are homework assignments that require students to talk to someone at home about something interesting that they are learning in class. TIPS helps solve some important problems with homework. It enables all families to become involved, not just those who already know how to discuss math, science, and other subjects.

The homework is the students' responsibility; parents are not asked to "teach" subjects or skills. TIPS requires students to share their work, ideas, and progress with their families. It asks families to comment on their children's work and to request other information in a section on home-to-school communications. With TIPS, homework becomes a three-way partnership involving

students, families, and teachers.

One immediate result of this program is that families recognize and appreciate the efforts of teachers to keep them informed and involved. The TIPS activities keep school on the agenda at home so that children know that their families believe school work is important and worth talking about.



Overcoming Obstacles

Hurdle 1: Homework should NOT always be done alone. Some teachers believe that all homework should be completed in a quiet place, away from the family or other people. Its purpose is to allow students to practice what was taught in class, to study for a quiz, or to complete other work on their own. While some homework is for these purposes, other homework should fulfill other goals. TIPS homework -- once per week in math or language arts, twice per month in science -- is designed specifically to keep students and their families talking about schoolwork at home. More than quarterly report cards, or lists of required skills, or other occasional explanations, TIPS brings school home on a regular schedule of homework that requires children to interact with members of their family.

Hurdle 2: Just any homework won't do. Some homework is pretty boring; it requires students' time, but not much thinking. TIPS activities must be challenging and engaging -- the type of homework that students will want to explain and share with their families. TIPS includes higher level thinking skills and interactions with family members that make students think, write, gather information, collect suggestions, explain, demonstrate, draw or construct things, and other interactive activities with parents and family members at home.

What are TIPS activities?

TIPS prototype activities are examples that teachers can use to design homework that matches the learning objectives for their students. There are TIPS prototype activities in math, science & health, and language arts.

TIPS Math provides a format for students to share what they are learning about a specific math skill. It allows students to show parents exactly how they learned a skill in class. Then, they complete regular homework activities, and obtain reactions from parents. TIPS Math, a weekly exercise, emphasizes the mastery of math skills -- basic and advanced. The activities may include challenges in games or other extensions of skills, or finding examples of the skill in real life situations.

TIPS Science and Health provides a format for students to conduct and discuss a hands-on "lab" or data collection activity related to the science topics studied in class. In Health, TIPS requires students to discuss topics, gather reactions, or collect data from family members on issues of

health and student development. The hands-on activities help students and their families see that these subjects are enjoyable, enriching, and part of every day life.

In Science, it is important that TIPS activities require only inexpensive or no-cost materials that are readily available at home. Special equipment, if ever needed, should be provided by the school. The Science & Health activities include a brief letter to parents explaining the topic. Then, the activities outline objectives, materials, space for lab reports or data charts, challenges, discussion questions, conclusions, and home-to-school communications. TIPS Science and Health should be assigned on a regular schedule (usually once or twice per month).

TIPS Language Arts provides a format for students to share skills in reading, writing, thinking, grammar, and related activities. Again, the students do the work -- reading and writing -- but students and parents enjoy thinking together, discussing, and exchanging ideas. Family members may listen to what their children write, help students edit their writing, think about words, react to writing, provide ideas, memories and their own experiences, and other interactions. TIPS Language Arts homework should be assigned every week or every other week.

After several years of development, TIPS now can be easily adopted or adapted. Teachers who see the activities usually say, "I can do that!" That is exactly the reaction that will help every teacher in every grade level and every subject design interactive homework for their students

and families.

How Do You Develop TIPS Homework?

TIPS can be developed and implemented in three clear steps:

1. Teachers work together during the summer months to design and develop homework assignments to match their own curricula and learning objectives.
2. Teachers use the assignments with students and families throughout the year.
3. Revisions are made based on feedback from students, parents, and teachers who are using the program.

One way to develop TIPS is for a school or school district to provide salary for a few teachers at each grade level to work together during the summer months. Support is needed for each teacher for two to four weeks to develop, edit, and print TIPS homework that will be used throughout the school year. TIPS homework activities can be used by other teachers in the school. This takes some careful thinking about the design of the homework; it helps if this work is developed by two or more teachers with the assistance of a curriculum supervisor, department chair, or other individual with a leadership role in developing and implementing the program.

Once tested, TIPS homework designs may be shared with other teachers or in other schools that follow the same curriculum objectives. Support for a few teachers in the summer, then, yields materials that can be used by many, for many years. The process is very cost-effective.

How Do You Implement TIPS Homework?

Teachers, students, administrators, and parents all have responsibility for the success of TIPS:

- * Teachers design the homework assignments or select those that match their class work, orient parents to the process, explain TIPS and family involvement to students, follow-up homework in class, and maintain homework records.

- * Students complete the TIPS assignments and involve their parents or other family members as directed in the activities.

- * Parents learn about the TIPS process, set aside time each week to discuss homework activities with their children, and complete the home-to-school communications.

To introduce parents to the process, letters may be sent, newsletters can announce the process, and TIPS may be explained at parent-teacher meetings and conferences. Grade level meetings may be conducted to show parents the TIPS activities on an overhead projector and describe how parents should proceed when their children bring activities home. Students also must be oriented to the program and reminded about family involvement each time TIPS assignments are made. Teachers must reinforce that they want the children to talk with someone at home about the work, and that they believe it is important for families to be aware of what children are learning in school.

How Do You Evaluate TIPS Homework?

There are two main goals for TIPS:

- * to encourage students to complete their homework well, and to improve attitudes, behaviors, and achievements; and

- * to create good information and interactions at home between students and their families about schoolwork.

TIPS homework comes with two "built in" evaluations. First, students are expected to complete the TIPS activities just as they do any homework. Teachers grade, return, and discuss TIPS just as they do other homework. Second, every TIPS activity includes a section called "home-to-school communication" so that parents can provide observations and reactions to their children's work. This section lets parents tell teachers if their children understood the homework or need extra help from the teacher, whether the assignment was enjoyable to parents and students at home, and if the activity informed parents about schoolwork in a particular subject. Teachers monitor parents' reactions and respond to questions with phone calls, notes, or individual meetings.

When educators use TIPS, they must evaluate whether and how the process helps them reach their goals for school and family connections. Follow-up activities are needed to learn whether parents need more information, explanations, or guidance in the use of TIPS at home and in their interactions with their children about schoolwork. This may be done with informal interviews, phone calls, or class or grade level meetings with parents. Some informal and formal evaluations of TIPS have been conducted and reports are available.

How Do Parents, Students, and Teachers React to TIPS Homework?

TIPS is a special type of homework. The activities should be printed on colored paper to stand out from other paper in the student's notebook. One district using TIPS reported a parent's reaction: "When I see that yellow paper, I know that is important homework for my son to complete with me."

In Baltimore, interviews and surveys of parents, students, and teachers in the middle grades reveal overwhelmingly positive reactions. Parents say they get to talk about things with their children that they would otherwise not discuss. For example, when students worked on TIPS Language Arts, parents wrote:

* I can tell from Jenneaka relating the story to me that she really enjoyed reading it.

* This blue paper is a learning experience for me.

* Very interesting assignment. I enjoyed this and it brought back good memories.

When students worked on TIPS Science and Health, parents wrote:

* We are still working on neatness.

* Althea's thought process was more mature than what I knew.

* I think she could have done a better job with the consequences.

* This opened up an easier way of communicating.

Students say they like TIPS because they do not have to copy the homework from the board, because it is not boring, and because they learn something from or about their parents or families that they did not know before. Most teachers report that more children complete TIPS than other homework.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AT SCHOOL AS VOLUNTEERS

TIPS Social Studies and Art

A second TIPS process -- *Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) Social Studies and Art* -- addresses the issue of organizing volunteers, especially in the middle grades. This process establishes a teacher-volunteer partnership to enrich the social studies curriculum for all students.

The TIPS Social Studies and Art process integrates art with social studies in the middle grades. The process brings volunteers (parents, other family members, or others from the community) to the school on a regular schedule to introduce artists and art work to students. When students study American history in social studies, they see and learn about American artists; world history is linked to the work of artists from around the world; government and citizen participation is linked to art work on themes of government and citizenship.

How Does TIPS Social Studies and Art Work?

Volunteers introduce a new visual print to

students each month from October to May. Over three middle grades (e.g., 6-8 or 7-9) students are introduced to the work of at least 24 artists who lived at different times and places using various styles, media and topics.

Presentations by parents or other volunteers on each art print require only 20 minutes of class time. Each presentation includes information on the artist's life, style and technique, the specific art work, connections to social studies, and topics for class discussion, writing, and art work. Research for the presentations may be conducted by parents who cannot volunteer at school, but who want to contribute time and ideas to improve school programs. Discussions include anecdotes and interesting information about the artist and art work that should interest middle grade students.

Why Implement TIPS Social Studies and Art?

This process is designed to increase students' knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of art, and to demonstrate connections of art with history, geography, and issues of importance in society. The TIPS process helps to solve three common problems in the middle grades -- the need for integrated or interdisciplinary curricula, the need for more productive parent volunteers, and the need for students to learn something about art as an important part of cultural literacy. The process is adaptable to other grade levels, other social studies units, and other subjects (e.g., art may be linked to English or literature; or to foreign language classes; or other subjects).

How Do You Implement TIPS Social Studies and Art?

The implementation process follows ten easy steps:

1. **Select a Teacher-Coordinator.** This is usually the chair of the Social Studies Department, a team leader, or a social studies teacher who is committed to implementing an interdisciplinary program.
2. **Select a Parent-Coordinator.** This is the person who will coordinate the schedules of the parent volunteers and who will train the volunteers. There should also be an assistant parent-coordinator who will assume the job during the next school year.
3. **Order the prints'** that fit the social studies curricula in grades 6,7,8, or the middle grades in your school. There must be enough prints for the monthly rotations among teachers.
4. **Teachers select the art prints** to be presented and discussed in their classes by the volunteers.
5. **Recruit volunteers** to make classroom presentations once a month from October to May.
6. **Train the volunteers** so they are comfortable about their presentations'. A manual helps with this training, making it possible to conduct the orientation session in about one hour.
7. **Schedule monthly presentations** at mutually convenient times for the volunteers and teachers. Volunteers will meet with the same classes each month.

8. **Coordinators check with volunteers** after the first visit and periodically throughout the year to see that the program is working as planned.

9. **Teachers evaluate students** to determine the benefits of the program for increasing knowledge about the artists and art work and the development of understanding, appreciation, and criticism of art.

10. **Make necessary improvements** in the implementation process and continue the program.

These steps will run smoothly once the parent-coordinator and teacher-coordinator become familiar with their roles and as the partnership develops between the volunteers and the teachers.

Additional TIPS information, prototypes, and materials can be obtained by writing or calling the Johns Hopkins University, Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning, 3505 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218. Telephone (410) 516-0370.

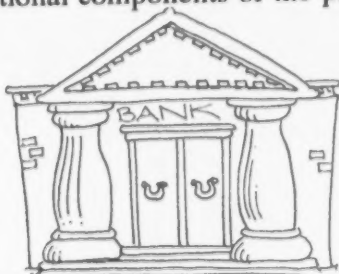
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STARTING A STUDENT BANK

James Smith

The study of economics is critically important for our students who must learn to compete in a world that is becoming increasingly "smaller" due to technology and global trading. To be effective, learning must come early on in a student's career. Unfortunately, most elementary school curricula are totally inadequate in this area. One of the most effective methods for supplementing your school's program in this subject is to start a student-run bank.

Establishing the bank may be easier than you think. The following recipe can be used by school faculty and administration, as well as interested community partners. If you are a parent or community volunteer, seek the assistance of the school principal in soliciting the interest in students, parents, and school faculty, and in establishing the curriculum and instructional components of the program.



CULTIVATE INTEREST

The first step in establishing a student bank is to develop support from students, faculty, parents, and community members. Students must be interested in the concept, and be willing to set aside some

of their money, however small, in savings. Parents must be willing to encourage their children to participate in the school's program. Teachers and other faculty members must agree to infuse economic concepts in their daily instructional program, and encourage students to save. Community members, especially small neighborhood business owners, must be available to assist with record keeping, as well as the provision of incentives to students.

Survey Students and Parents. Start with a simple parent-student survey. In a short letter to parents and students, explain that the school is thinking about starting a student bank to encourage savings and to foster an understanding of economic principles. The letter should ask parents to discuss the matter with their children, and then return a tear-off survey that includes the following information:

- name and grade of each student;
- whether or not the student has an existing savings account;
- whether the student would be willing to start an account if one were available at the school;
- how much money the child could save each week;
- what the students think they might do with the savings.

This last question, while entirely optional, is an excellent way for parents to open a discussion with their children about the virtues of saving for important items and

occasions.

Finally, have parents sign the survey under a statement that says: *I have discussed this survey with my child, and I support the concept of establishing a student bank at the school.*

Once the surveys are returned, tabulate the responses by grade level. The data will establish the percentage of your students and families willing to participate. The grade level count will help determine the feasibility of implementing the program across grades or in select grade levels. This is important, as it will impact the instructional program as well as the number of volunteers needed. Finally, determine the amount of money that would be collected on a weekly basis. The bank will need this information in order to establish a program that is right for your school.

Survey Teachers and Faculty Members. Collecting money from students on a weekly basis is but one of several hands-on *tools* that can be used to teach the fundamentals of economics in the classroom. To be truly effective, an entire program must be incorporated into the daily instructional routine. In order to do this, the school's faculty -- particularly classroom teachers -- must fully participate in the project.

Survey the faculty to determine interest in the program. This may be most effectively accomplished in a staff meeting. Teachers must be willing to weave economic concepts into the regular instructional program (see below), provide encouragement to students, and take some role in record keeping. By presenting the

idea of student banking as an instructional tool, teachers will more easily see the benefits.

Contact Community Organizations and Businesses. While schools can implement a student bank on their own, the project is most successful when community organizations and businesses are involved. First, these groups provide a good source of volunteers to help operate the program. Second, community and business volunteers can provide students with classroom experiences in economics, such as writing checks, developing a budget, the meaning and uses of credit, etc. Third, these groups may be a source of incentives that will be given to students for establishing savings accounts.

Contact the neighborhood community and business association. If one does not exist, contact a fraternal, civic, or governmental service organization with an interest in, or connection with, economics education.

GO TO THE BANK

Most community banking/savings institutions will be delighted to serve the school; it's not only good business practice, but also a chance for the institution to demonstrate their commitment to the needs of the community as required by the national Community Reinvestment Act.

For obvious reasons, you should select a banking institution that has a branch office in the vicinity of the school. You may also "shop around" to determine which institutions have the highest yields on savings, as well as those that have a reputation for both financial soundness and service, and sensitivity to the

community.

Make an appointment with the branch officer to explain your program. Get details on interest rates (amount and compounding method), methods of collection and disbursement of funds, amount of paperwork involved for individual transactions, and customer support. Shop around! Every bank and savings institution has different operating procedures, priorities, and services.

DEVELOP THE CURRICULUM

Effective student banking programs have classroom components in place before the actual savings program begins. This phase of the program should be developed under the leadership of a teacher or school-based committee. It will be useful to include on this committee a parent, a representative from the bank, and a local business volunteer. The following are some suggested classroom topics. Their content will vary across grade levels:

- What is money?
- What are banks?
- What is savings? Checking?
- Why do people save money?
- What is a budget?
- What do customers need to know?
- Why do people use banks?
- What do bank workers do?

Once basic concepts are established, the student banking program can commence. It is important that the program be "hands-on." By letting the students operate the program, they will learn by doing numeration, fractions, percents, estimation, comparison and contrast, and the differences between fact and opinion.

They will learn to appreciate the real-world uses of graphs, tables, and charts.

By combining the banking program with both classroom applications and guest speakers (such as businesspersons and banking officials), a complete unit in economics is possible. During a typical fifth grade economics unit, students should:

- be introduced to business and economics-related skills and concepts;
- develop some awareness of the operations and responsibilities of businesses in the free-enterprise system;
- explore careers in business;
- apply reading and communications skills;
- read and understand contracts;
- develop an understanding of business terminology and banking skills;
- recognize the necessity to prepare for future careers;
- establish their own bank account;
- develop an appreciation for the value of saving and of money;
- develop an understanding of entrepreneurship;
- develop a better understanding of self, and a sense of pride of ownership.

IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM

Once the program is developed, the bank can open for business. Here's what you'll need to do:

1. **Send a letter home.** Inform students and parents that the savings program will commence. Provide families with a monthly bank date (i.e., third Wednesday of the month). You may also set up a separate "registration day" when students can open their accounts. They will need

to bring a social security card and have a parent/guardian's name on the account.

2. Organize parent/community volunteers and student leaders. Volunteers will be needed to assist student leaders in administering the monthly bank day.

■ There should be at least one student leader per class. For lower grades, assign a student representative from the student council or a student from an enriched fourth or fifth grade class.

■ Student leaders, *under the supervision of adult volunteers*, will be trained as "accountants" to collect and disburse funds, keep class registers, make entries on individual accounts kept by each "customer," and, depending on the bank, compute interest to be tabulated on each account.

■ Adult volunteers will serve in a liaison capacity to the bank, in addition to their role as student supervisors.

There should also be a faculty advisor assigned to the project.

3. Order supplies. The bank will supply most of the necessary deposit and withdrawal forms. Class registers, calculators, envelopes and other items should be supplied by the school or a business partner.

4. Enlist the Support of Business Partners. Business partners can play a vital role in enhancing educational projects and in sponsoring award and incentive programs. Classroom visits by experts in the banking and finance industry are excellent activities, as are field trips to the

bank, brokerage house, and local Federal Reserve office. Your sponsoring bank and/or area financial services business are likely prospects for these educational supports.

PROVIDE INCENTIVES

Incentive award programs are an important part of student banking projects. Promoting savings instills in students responsibility, pride of ownership, and other values that are important in our society and economy. Rewards serve as a positive reinforcement of these values.

Special award programs for certain savers should focus on incentives for leaving money in the bank over long periods of time. Savings bonds and "bonus" interest payments are ideal rewards. Awards for "the most" savings are NOT recommended, as the amount of savings varies depending on the economic status of the student. In any event, all students should recognize that the interest applied to their accounts on a quarterly basis is the incentive that the bank provides for the use of money.

Student "accountants" should also receive some recognition for their hard work. Special pizza parties or finance-related gifts such as pocket calculators are ideal.

Finally, don't forget to thank the adult volunteers. Special end-of-year volunteer appreciation events will encourage participation in the program.

James Smith is Principal of Arlington Elementary School No. 234 in Baltimore City.

SECTION C
Other Foods for Thought

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ADVOCACY

or How the Squeaky Wheel Gets Oiled*

Susan Leviton

An advocate is a person who argues for or recommends a cause, position, or proposal. Advocacy is the work of persuasion -- convincing others to do what you think needs to be done and the way it should be done. For example, you want to get a computer program in your son's school. You know that money is tight. You also know that the principal would love to help you, but can't do anything without money from the school system. As an advocate, you sit down and figure out who can help you, who can stop you, and who you must convince to make it happen.

Whether you are advocating for your child, your school, or for a program in your community, there are several important ideas and strategies that you will need to keep in mind. This recipe will help you achieve success in your advocacy effort!

♦♦♦



CLEARLY IDENTIFY YOUR GOAL

We enter into each battle seeking a specific outcome...It has spared us the vague and intangible efforts to do good that absorb so much of the energies of well-intentioned organizations.

-John Gardner
Founder of Common Cause

In other words, **know what you want!** If you can't explain what you want and why you want it to yourself or to your friends,

then there is no way that you are going to convince anybody else.

All parents want to improve their children's schools, but not all parents know how or even where to begin. It is important that parents are involved if they want to guarantee better schools for their children. Here are a few suggestions on taking the first step toward defining goals:

■ **ASSESS YOUR SCHOOL.** It's not enough to simply say that something should be done to improve the school. What is it that you want to accomplish? There are several items to examine in determining this:

What is the dropout rate at the local high school or the feeder school that your child will attend?

Does your school provide access to high content courses to all students? Does your school actively engage students in learning, or is most of the time spent listening to teachers lecture?

How many math and science classes are offered to students, and how many of those are required? (The U.S. ranked last or near the bottom in comparison with a dozen countries around the world in these subjects).

What are the attendance rates for students and teachers?

What are the numbers of suspensions and expulsions in your school over the past three years?

What are the reading levels of the students in the school? (About half of all chronically unemployed workers in the country are illiterate).

How many students use drugs or alcohol in the school? (One recent survey found that about one in ten high school and junior high school students used illegal drugs in the previous month).

You can find out what the situation in your local school is by talking to teachers, administrators, and your children. Contact your school's central office or your state's department of education and ask for this information. Also, many schools or advocacy groups have developed report cards on their schools. This will provide useful information in determining your targeted issues.



SET YOUR GOALS

Once you find the problem you want to focus upon, set goals for your school. For example, if the dropout rate is 20%, try to cut it in half. If the standardized test scores are low, try to improve the scores

so that they meet or exceed the average scores for the area or state.

Involve others in goal-setting. Talk to your school administrators, teachers, PTA, and other parents. You might also contact local officials, local community and business leaders, and agencies that serve children and families. Listen to all ideas, and set reasonable goals for both the short and long term. Call a meeting of school officials and parents, and try to find a way to work together to reach the reasonable goals that you set together.



SIMPLIFY AND CLARIFY THE ISSUE

If the issue is too complicated or the solution too difficult, people will be afraid of it. Make the solution seem simple, even if it is not. If you are looking for major changes, then try to break down the problem into smaller, workable parts. Start with the easy problems and work up to the harder, more complicated ones.



SET HIGH STANDARDS

Not failure, but low aim, is a crime.

-James Russell Lowell

We must set high standards. Don't begin by suggesting what the school will see as "realistic." Instead, start by asking for what the children really need. The higher we set our standards, the greater likelihood for progress. Remember,

Climb high, climb far, your goal the sky, your aim the star.

-Anonymous



**RESEARCH THE PROBLEM.
COLLECT DATA. RESEARCH
SOME MORE.**

Information is Power.

Talk to teachers and principals about the situation. Ask them for their ideas and concerns. Government and schools provide numerous reports. Usually the type of information you need is already collected by the school system. Therefore, before conducting original research, ask the school, the central office or the state whether the information has already been collected. Some examples of where you can get useful information:

- ♦ the budget rationale section in the executive branch's (e.g., mayor, governor) request for funds. This information usually contains levels or trends in funding;
- ♦ federal and state plans in which problems are documented and solutions offered;
- ♦ grant proposals submitted by the education department to the state or federal government, or private foundations;
- ♦ program reports submitted by education agencies on a quarterly or yearly basis to the federal government;
- ♦ public testimony made by education officials;
- ♦ presentations that are made by public officials at public meetings;
- ♦ records obtained through the legal

process as a result of lawsuits;

- ♦ government employees who are willing to talk openly to advocates and who have access to internal documents; and
- ♦ the state "newspaper of record," community and tabloid newspapers, and organizational newsletters.

Find out where the school is spending money so you can show them how even without new money they can fund your proposal. The more you know, the better prepared you will be to confront the problem and the school or school system.



**TRY TO FIND MODELS IN USE
IN OTHER SCHOOLS**

When meeting with the school leadership, you might be told "your solution will never work" or that "it's too expensive." But imagine if you can prove that the solution can work and is affordable by showing them an example from another school. If you can find that the problem has existed elsewhere and was solved, then your position will be enhanced.



OFFER SOLUTIONS

Do NOT simply state the problem to school employees and then ask what they intend to do about it. It is much better to offer solutions to them. People running schools are very busy. If you can offer a solution to a problem, sometimes officials will adopt it. Also, remember that no matter how reasonable your solution sounds to you, they might not be able to

do it because of fiscal constraints. Try to develop solutions that show how the school could spend money differently to fund your proposal. Show why it is important to give you what you are asking for, as well as the problems that will arise if they do not.



GET OTHER PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT YOU

There is strength in numbers! It is easy for the school or school system to dismiss one concerned parent. It is hard for them to ignore a large and vocal group. However, even if you can't get a large group, remember, *one loud voice in the crowd often becomes the voice of the majority.*

You must also educate the public. Most people, if they were aware of the terrible condition of many schools in their community, would be willing to support funding targeted to specific outcomes. As a community, we cannot tolerate the growing sentiment that the situation of poor kids and their schools (for example) is someone else's problem. We must teach a core of parents and community advocates good advocacy skills. Although this is time-consuming up front, it pays dividends in the long run.

Catch me a fish, I eat today, teach me to fish, I eat for a lifetime.



SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY REQUIRES A MULTI-STRATEGY APPROACH

Beware of the man of one book.
- Thomas Aquinas

To be successful, you must have the ability

to employ multiple strategies. In some situations, data gathering, research, reporting and negotiation skills will become your goal. Other situations may require public education, constituency building, and negotiating. At other times, going to the press is the proper role, while still other situations may require litigation. The most successful advocacy campaign is one which employs a full array of strategies.



UNDERSTAND YOUR OPPOSITION

Often we are unsuccessful because we fail to take into account the nature of large bureaucracies. Therefore, in order to formulate an effective strategy, you must be aware of some of the idiosyncracies of large bureaucracies. For example, although individuals really care about kids, bureaucracies sometimes have policies or operate in a manner detrimental to the kids they are supposed to serve. Understand that bureaucracies often have the potential to abuse authority, lack adequate resources, have a monopoly of services for poor people, and often resist change because of inertia. Moreover, officials running the system do not always hear how the system they run actually works. A knowledge of how bureaucracies work allows advocates to anticipate bureaucrats' responses to their efforts to reform or change the system.



DON'T BE AFRAID, YOUR CHILD WON'T SUFFER

Without risk there is no beauty and no romance.

-Mahatma Gandhi

Everyone wants to be liked. It takes courage to confront decision makers, and many parents fear that if they speak up, their children will suffer. In reality, parents who don't speak up get nothing. Only the children whose parents are willing to speak up and take risks on their behalf get quality services. Remember, power concedes *nothing* without demands.



**DON'T EXAGGERATE OR
OVERSTATE YOUR CASE**

*[A]dvocacy is necessary to justice,
and honesty is essential to
advocacy.*

-Judge Edward Abbott Parry

In our efforts to get funds to support our goals, some of us might want to embellish the truth occasionally. But integrity is our most valuable asset. Once you misrepresent the facts, you won't be trusted again.



**KEEP A SENSE OF HUMOR,
PERSPECTIVE, AND HOPE**

*Reporter: Mr. Gandhi, what do you
think of Western civilization?*

*Gandhi: I think it is a good idea.
I think they should try it.*

Without the ability to laugh at oneself, to have high expectations, and to believe that you can make a difference, you won't succeed. Advocacy is hard work, but without a sense of humor and hope, you won't have the persistence to make it happen.



**WRITE DOWN YOUR IDEAS AND
PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

Ideas become more impressive when in writing. Include in your written proposal a statement of the problem, data supporting the extent of the problem, the proposed solution, the proposed outcomes associated with the proposal, and who should be responsible for its implementation.



**KNOW WHEN AND WHEN NOT
TO COMPROMISE**

If you are asking for twenty new computers for the school, the school system may be able to afford only ten. Don't refuse those computers hoping to get more. Be willing to accept a reasonable agreement even if it does not meet your expectations. *But don't give up.* Take ten computers this year and come back next year for ten more. People with high expectations get better results.



**NEVER THREATEN (UNLESS
YOU HAVE THE POWER TO
CARRY THROUGH ON THE
THREAT)**

If you want someone to do something for you, then you either give him a reward for doing it or threaten to punish him if he doesn't. The usual threat of punishment to a bureaucracy is either "I'll sue," or "I'll take this problem to the press." But threatening to do these things will almost never work against the bureaucracy unless you are able to produce these threats.



**SUMMARIZE THE MEETING
AND GET AGREEMENTS IN
WRITING**

When meeting with school officials about a specific proposal, there are certain

procedures that you should follow.

First, before the meeting ends, restate everything you understood from what was agreed upon. Re-state any agreements you reached. State any promises that were made. List the action that every individual agreed to take, when it will be completed, and by whom.

After you leave the meeting, write a letter summarizing the meeting and listing any agreements reached and actions individuals agreed to take.

However, your advocacy does not end with the meeting. Unfortunately, a school system often dismisses a problem by agreeing to do things in a meeting and then doing nothing. Many times, the players refuse to act.

GET AGREEMENTS IN WRITING. Don't let the school dismiss you by agreeing with you. You might hear "sure, anything you say, we will get right on that problem," and then nothing happens. Ask for details on how key players plan to solve the problem. Don't accept their promises to form a "task force." (Sometimes they work wonders, but they are not the answer to every issue). If school officials promise to investigate the problem, ask for deadlines and try to set up another meeting to review the results with them. Make sure that any agreements are put in writing. Offer to write out what was decided so that you know it will get done and be accurate. If the school writes out the terms of the agreement, read it over carefully to make sure that it actually says what you thought was agreed to.



PERSISTENCE AND TENACITY ARE THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

Reform is no sport for the short-winded.

-Arthur Vanderbilt, eminent jurist

Dedicate some time to your cause. You must understand that the school system has time on its side, and in many cases, problems (or angry parents) go away if the school waits long enough. Don't disappear. Make sure the school knows you won't give up.

Never give up, never give up, never give up! If the school administration does not agree with you, try to get it to state exactly what it doesn't like about your proposal. Make sure you write down what they say. Then revise your proposal to try to meet their concerns. Start at the top and work down this list again, changing anything that did not go well the first time. **Remember, persistence is the most important key to successful advocacy.**



BE OUTCOME ORIENTED

*We guard against aimless
disruption of energy by a
simple operating
philosophy: we do nothing
but fight specific battles...
We enter each battle
seeking a specific
outcome. We stay in until
we win or lose.*

-John Gardner, Founder
of Common Cause

The easiest way for the school system to do nothing is to hold endless meetings, form a task force, and focus not on outcomes, but on process. Constantly ask yourself: Is what we're doing likely to

bring about a positive outcome for our children? If not, *stop doing it!*

** Much of the material and ideas for this chapter is taken with permission from Fairness Is A Kid's Game, by David Richart and Stephen Bing.*

Susan Leviton is President of Advocates for Children and Youth, Inc., Associate Professor, University of Maryland School of Law, and a parent.

MEASURING SUCCESS:

Evaluating Your Program

Matthew Joseph

WHY MEASURE SUCCESS?

Determining whether a school-community project is making a difference in student achievement, morale, or fund raising is often the least of your worries. You've got volunteers to find, money to raise, and a thousand other things to do. In short, finding and keeping all the ingredients in your recipe are enough to keep you more than busy. Moreover, you can *see* that the project is working. You and your organizers can share a dozen success stories with each other. You don't need a scientific study to know that your recipe turned out great -- you can simply *taste* it and find out!

But stop and think for a moment. No project is perfect. Don't you want to know what parts worked best? If you repeat the same recipe again, don't you want some hard evidence of success? If you want to "sell" other people on your idea, don't you need objective facts to back up your claim of success?

WHAT'S THE FIRST STEP?

The time to think about measuring success is *before* you even start a project. Often, waiting until the recipe is completed is too late. You should start by putting down in writing the goals of your project. Whenever possible, include

some numbers in your goals. For example, increasing attendance at PTO meetings is a good goal. Increasing attendance *by fifty percent* is even better. Remember that your ultimate goal should be related to students doing better in school. If one of your goals is to double the number of volunteer tutors, how do you expect this increase to help students do better in school? You should include goals that describe these student goals. For example, an additional goal might be that increased tutoring will increase test scores by ten percent.

Some projects may not have numerical goals or goals related to students doing better in school. For example, if your project is to paint the inside walls of the school, it may be hard to measure success other than to say the job is completed. A brighter, cleaner environment should make staff and students happier, which may result in a better quality of education for the students. Unfortunately, measuring direct impact on students may be impossible. There is nothing wrong with this project. However, you may want to spend most of your time with projects that can show a measurable impact on students.

MATCHING GOALS WITH STRATEGIES

You have your list of goals. Now you should put down what you plan to do to achieve these goals. This is an important step in focusing your project. For



example, the first goal may be doubling the number of volunteer tutors in the school. The strategies might include placing advertisements in newspapers and approaching local churches and businesses. If your second goal is decreasing the failure rate of students in reading, your strategies might include training tutors to use a particular tutorial system to improve reading skills and help students do their homework. You should have some reason to believe that these strategies will work.

Some goals will have more than one strategy. That's fine. However, if one of your strategies doesn't fit any goal, you might want to eliminate it. Also, if one of your goals has no strategies beside it, you should either cut out the goal or come up with a strategy that will help meet the goal.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHETHER YOU HAVE REACHED YOUR GOALS?

Now that you have your goals and strategies, you need to come up with a method for measuring whether you succeeded in achieving your goals at different points in the project. Let's stick with the tutoring example. In order to measure whether you have doubled the number of tutors, you need an attendance system that indicates how many tutors have been coming on a regular basis to tutor the students. You need to compare that number to how many tutors you had before the project began. To measure whether you increased reading skills, you must determine how many students currently fail their reading class, and compare that number to how many failed reading before the project began.

When coming up with a method for measuring success, you often need some kind of comparison to put your success in context. One method, as just described, is to compare your success with a time before the project. A second method is to compare your students to a similar group of students who are not part of the project. For example, you might compare the reading failure rate of your students to a similar group of students in a nearby school. If using this method, it is important that the comparison group in the other school has a similar reading ability to your group. A final method is to compare your results to similar students in your own school. The best way to do this is to locate a group of students who you think would benefit from the project and take every other one into your project and leave the remainder as a comparison group.

Each method has different plusses and minuses. Often it is helpful to use more than one method. You should try to get the help of a professional researcher with the school system, or at a local college or university.

As a final step, you must decide how you will collect the information. If your goal is to improve reading skills, will you rely on teacher grades, standardized test scores, or something else? Often, one "instrument" is better or more reliable than another.

The accompanying page describes an outline for showing the goals, strategies, and methods in one of the examples above.

A FINAL REPORT

While your project is in progress, you should be gathering all the data that you will need to measure your goals. Once the project is complete, it is time to bring your information together and determine whether you reached your goals. You should prepare a final report on your project.

Remember, very few projects achieve all

of their goals. Based on your various successes and failures, you can make certain conclusions. Is the project worth doing again? Were all of our goals good ones? How can we do better in areas where the project fell short of its goals?

Matthew Joseph is former program officer for the Abell Foundation in Baltimore.

Example: Volunteer Tutor Recruitment Drive: To find additional people in the community willing to tutor students one-on-one in reading on a volunteer basis.

GOAL

STRATEGIES

METHOD

1. To double the number of volunteer tutors.

a. Place advertisements in neighborhood newspapers and publications.

b. Post fliers in malls and other public areas.

c. Contact churches and local businesses and try to get commitments for tutors.

d. Improve tutor appreciation efforts in order to keep the tutors already involved in the school.

2. To decrease the number of students who fail by 25 percent.

a. Train tutors in the reading tutorial program that was purchased last year.

b. Ask tutors to spend one-third of the tutorial time helping students do their homework and study for quizzes and tests.

We will keep track of the number of people coming in to tutor students on a regular basis. We will compare this total to the same total for last year.

We will compare the current reading failure rate to the rate in our school last year. We will also find a similar classroom in the school that was not part of the project and compare our project classroom's rate this year with the comparison classroom's rate.

BUDGETS MADE SIMPLE

Judson Porter

Budgets are an inescapable fact of school life. Virtually every decision that is made regarding education has implications for taxes and taxpayers. Knowing what a budget is, and using that knowledge to make positive changes in the education of children in your community, are a must for all citizens who care about youngsters and their future. This chapter will provide an overview of budget basics.

♦♦♦

Budgets can seem difficult in many ways. For one thing, the language of budgets tends to be numbers. Many of us started fearing numbers early on with the memorization of the multiplication tables. As adults, numbers are important in balancing our checkbooks and preparing our tax returns -- two of our least favorite activities.

Apart from numbers, budgets tend to be complicated and tell us little about what's going on. Often there are terms like funds, objects, sub-objects, programs, cost centers, activities, functions, organization charts, position listings, and so on. These can be confusing to just about anyone.

Well, it doesn't have to be that way. When broken down into its parts, and when its purposes are understood, a budget is truly as simple as addition and subtraction.

WHAT IS A BUDGET?

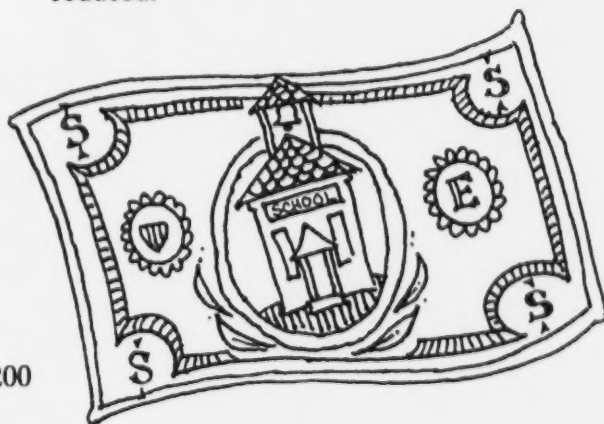
While a budget may be defined differently

according to the many purposes it may serve, a simple definition is possible. A budget is a tool for planning the use of resources. When people think of budgets, they think of money; but money, like numbers, is merely the language of budgets. It is the common denominator.

The resources that are available, often called *revenue*, are estimated in dollars. These dollars are then used to purchase different kinds of resources to accomplish some result. The dollars that are used are called *expenses* or *expenditures*.

Resources may include people. These are employees of the school system who are paid salaries and receive benefits, such as health insurance. Supplies, equipment, and electricity are also classified as resources.

In a budget, the cost of each of these is *estimated*, or guessed, using the best information available. The sum of these costs cannot exceed the estimate of revenue, or the budget is *unbalanced*. In that case, either additional revenue must be obtained, or plans for spending must be reduced.



The technical term for the categories of resources that are used is *object* of expenditure. In other words, objects describe what we buy or use to produce our product or service (Our product in this case is "educated children."). For example, salaries for employees are generally considered an object. Objects are usually given a number code, such as 1 for "pay". These estimates can be broken down further into what are called *sub-objects*. Overtime pay, for example, is a specific kind of pay, and it could be designated as "1-05," where "05" means overtime as part of object 1, salaries and wages. Different organizations use different codes, but the overall structure is common.

WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF BUDGETS AND BUDGETING?

*** Financial Control**

The first and most important reason for devising a budget is for financial control. In most organizations, a budget must be adopted by one or more governing authorities. In a city, this might be the board of estimates and the city council. It may be a school system, a state legislature, a board of trustees in a private school, and so on.

When governing bodies establish a budget, they are making a statement about how they want resources to be used. The controls on how money is used vary from being very specific to very broad.

Appropriations are the authority to spend. Proposed spending, as listed in the budget document, is usually compared to appropriations at some level of detail

before actual spending can occur. The point of all this is to assure that expenses occur according to a plan and do not exceed available revenues. When expenses exceed revenues, a *deficit* occurs.

*** Managing the Organization**

A budget can be an important tool in managing an organization. The financial control approach discussed above only relies on objects to assure that you buy and use the resources as planned. It does not, however, guarantee that you actually accomplish anything!

The operational management approach classifies expenses by *activities* designed to achieve a certain result. Take the school system's mailroom for example. The object/sub-object budget for a mailroom would include salaries for drivers and clerks, estimates for postage, equipment and vehicle purchase, and funds for their maintenance and repair.

In a *line item* (object/sub-object) type of budget, these estimates might be buried as part of the estimates for the whole organization. However, in an output-oriented budget, the estimates for the mailroom would appear separately as an activity of the school system. Furthermore, facts such as the number of items mailed through the U.S. Postal Service, the number delivered internally, etc., would be presented.

The management approach allows managers and others to see exactly what is achieved for the expenditures. If sophisticated enough, this method can yield *productivity measures* such as the cost per item of internal mail delivered.

* Alternative Use of Resources

Finally, budgeting can be a useful tool for looking at alternative ways of using resources. At the risk of using jargon, this purpose is the essence of the *planning-programming-budgeting system (PPBS)* or *zero-based budgeting (ZBB)*. While these ideas can be difficult to implement, they do not have to be.

In an output-oriented budget, you are attempting to find out what amount of money will produce a certain level of output. For example, you might ask: "If we increase teacher salaries by 10%, what amount of increase can we expect in student achievement?"

The planning approach calls for you to look at your starting point in two different ways. First, for any given level of service, there are different (and possibly better) ways of achieving that level of service. The mailroom, for example, might contract the service to a private provider instead of using town or city employees. Second, this approach identifies what different levels of service are possible, and what budgets would be required for each level. In the mailroom, delivering internal mail once per day would involve less expense and require a smaller budget than doing so three times per day.

Looking at alternative levels and methods for each area of the organization (instruction, curriculum, research, etc.) allows a large organization to mix and match in a way that makes the best use of resources.

USING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

Now that you have been acquainted with the basic language and purposes of budgets, how can you best use the information to affect positive change in your school or school district? This section will address how you might apply what you have learned so that you will be able to prepare your own budget or analyze others.

STEP 1: Describe what you want to accomplish during the time period covered by the budget.

In a school, for example, you want learning to occur. This is the bottom line.

STEP 2: Estimate how you will accomplish your purpose.

In a school there are several things that you need to accomplish student learning. You want instruction to occur with certain class sizes. You want each child to have a textbook in a certain number of subjects, and so on. Essentially, deciding how you will accomplish your purposes will determine the different types of resources you will need to use. These can be classified by object.

STEP 3: Determine the quantity of resources you need.

To have an average class size of 30 in an elementary school of 300 pupils, you will need 10 teachers. To have a textbook for the exclusive use of each pupil in 4 subjects, you'll need 1,200 textbooks.

However, if textbooks are shared among classes, fewer would be needed, and more resources would be available to fund different approaches to student learning.

STEP 4: Estimate the unit cost of each type of resource you need.

A teacher (benefits included) might cost \$40,000 per year. An average textbook might cost \$15.

STEP 5: Compute your first budget estimate.

This is done by multiplying the quantity of each resource by its estimated unit cost and then adding the results. The salary for ten teachers in our example would be \$400,000, (10 teachers x \$40,000 each). The textbooks, if exclusively used by pupils, would be \$18,000 (1,200 books x \$15 each) if all purchased new in one year. Together, the estimate is \$418,000.

STEP 6: Compare the estimated cost to the revenue available, and adjust the plan until it is balanced.

In the school example, the teachers and textbooks alone would be \$418,000. If the school was given only \$380,000 for these resources, adjustments would be required. If the school decided on class sizes of 33-34, only 9 teachers would be needed and the school would be able to add other resources in the amount of \$2,000 ($\$418,000 - 40,000 = \$378,000$), because the revised plan would cost \$2,000 less than the revenue available.

ANALYZING A BUDGET

Having covered how to prepare a budget, the next step is to learn how to analyze one. Follow the same steps, and determine whether the budget addresses the content of each step. If not, ask these questions:

- ♦ What is the organization or unit's purpose? Does the allocation of resources reflect that purpose?
- ♦ How is the purpose accomplished? Are there alternative ways of accomplishing these tasks?
- ♦ What resources are used? Are there alternatives?
- ♦ Could different, cheaper resources or methods be used to accomplish the same purpose?
- ♦ Is the budget balanced?

Remember *no basic question is unfounded!*
Ask and see what happens.

♦♦♦

Budgets can be simple. Simple or not, they will always be important. There are never enough resources to go around. If there were, we wouldn't need budgets! Nevertheless, while budgets can be simple to understand, they will always be challenging. They specify who gets what and how much; this requires balancing interests and demands. The more you understand about budgets, the more you

will be able to participate in the decision-making process and school improvement.

Judson Porter is director of Fiscal Management Services for the Baltimore City Public Schools.

DESIGNING A MISSION, GOALS, AND PHILOSOPHY FOR YOUR SCHOOL

Richard Lodish

INTRODUCTION

No aspect of a school is more important in shaping its character than how it articulates its purpose. Before anything else is done, a school must first define its mission; then all else that happens -- curriculum, grouping children, instructional strategies, teacher development -- must fit this mission. Regardless of educational fads, it is important -- indeed *mandatory* -- for a school to define its own vision, its own purpose, what it is, what it is not, what it seeks to do, and why.

Too much in education these days can be likened to a copying machine. By some stroke of magic we think we can reproduce successful programs. Then, as if from a video camcorder, we expect instant results. Schools are not necessarily right or wrong and are not inherently good or bad. Different schools have different missions. Schools should define these missions, act on them, and tailor programs to enhance these goals.

The way in which the mission and corresponding philosophies and goals are developed, understood, and sustained is crucial to maintaining the vitality of a school. In short, a *philosophy* states the school's beliefs; a *mission* defines a school's intended action; and the *goals* express specifically how the mission will be attained. Most schools, in fact, do know

generally where they are going, but usually this knowledge is implicit and unwritten, part of an information network passed on from administrator to administrator, teacher to teacher, and from parent to parent. A school needs to define its mission, its philosophy, and its goals *in writing* so that they can be understood, reviewed, and put into practice by all members of the school community.

DEFINITION OF A MISSION STATEMENT

The mission defines the overall purpose of the school and incorporates the beliefs, concepts, and values on which all the school's programs are based and the goals toward which the school's efforts are directed.

A mission statement should be brief -- one or two paragraphs of narrative -- simple, and easily understood by all. It should serve as a framework for all else that is done in the school. All the objectives, action plans, curriculum strategies, etc. should support this mission; at least, they certainly should not be in conflict with it.

Although the mission statement itself should be short, time, care, and consensus-building are required to develop it. The school's mission should be attainable and not idealized or vague. Each of its carefully chosen words should have a clear

connection with what goes on in the school. A mission statement should illuminate all aspects of a school's daily life. If, for example, a school mission describes a "commitment to independent thinking by students with judgments balanced by receptivity to the ideas of others," then these qualities should be reflected in the curriculum, in classroom discussions, and in questions posed by teachers. If the school stresses its "commitment to acceptances of differences and developing in students a broader sense of the world," then this conviction should be evident in the daily life of the school -- in its formal curriculum as well as in informal discussions and activities. If a school's mission is to "provide a growth-oriented environment for teachers," then workshops, courses, professional study groups, and other professional enrichment experiences should be available and faculty participation encouraged. The mission thus establishes an essential *frame of reference*, a lens through which we view all that goes on in a school.

DEFINITION OF PHILOSOPHY

A school's philosophy articulates a series of beliefs that are stated directly and relate to what the school is doing or attempting to do.

How is the philosophy related to the mission statement? The mission statement applies the beliefs stated in the philosophy to establish a central direction for the school. If, for example, a school states in its philosophy that it "believes that children learn in different ways according to their unique development timetables," the mission statement might say that "Taylor Elementary School recognizes and

respects different learning styles and is united in our commitment to reach each child."

A philosophy statement should address, but not be limited to, what people in the school believe about:

- * the purpose of the school;
- * the relevance of the philosophy to the larger purposes of American democracy;
- * special characteristics and/or unique needs of the age of children in the school;
- * the roles and relationships of people in the school community including students, parents, teachers, administrators, parents, businesses, and area citizens;
- * articulation: the relationship between elementary to middle school and/or middle school to high school;
- * overall content and methods of instruction;
- * desirable types of learning activities;
- * how students learn;
- * the intended outcomes of education;
- * how teachers are viewed as both professionals and learners in their own right;
- * the accountability of the school to the larger community.

A school's statement of philosophy also should be compatible with the statement of philosophy of the larger school system

or district of which it is a member.

GOALS FOR A SCHOOL

The philosophy statement is necessarily broad and its application to what actually happens in the school on a day-to-day basis may be limited. Thus there is a need to state specific **goals** that provide direction for the daily life of the school.

The goals define the steps toward, and the yardsticks by which we measure, a school's attainment of its mission.

Goals generally fall into the following categories:

- * goals for the institution; e.g., "to create an environment that encourages independent study and inquiry;"

- * goals for the teachers; e.g., "to provide students with the experiences necessary to help them begin to shape their social and political convictions;"

- * goals for the students; e.g., "to realize the importance of standing up for their own beliefs."

Although there are clear distinctions between goals, philosophy, and mission, it is common for schools to blend a mission and philosophy statement into one document with a list of goals at the end. Such a statement goes back and forth from commitments to beliefs (e.g., "Blair Middle School believes in serving the larger community, and thus is committed to encouraging and helping children to perform service for others"). A related goal might then state that students will perform ten hours of service per month in

community centers, nursing homes, etc.

HOW A MISSION, GOAL, AND PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT IS DEVELOPED

No single format can work equally well for all schools, but whatever the process for developing the statement and determining the elements to be included, the process must be agreed upon by, and actively involve, all members of the school community. Although the primary working group tends to be the principal and the faculty, this body should also include other administrators, school booster representatives, parent-teacher organization representatives, central office representatives, school board representatives, students, parents, and other key stakeholders in the life of the school.

The mission and philosophy statement will generally be put together by representatives from different branches of the school community who form a steering committee of from five to ten people. They should check frequently with their respective groups for modification, clarification, and improvement. Whatever the formal plan for putting together the statement, it must be flexible and adaptable. What may have seemed a reasonable system for achieving consensus may not actually work as expected.

After the steering committee is formed, different techniques may be employed to construct a mission and philosophy statement. A common method is to have the committee study carefully, through questionnaires and/or interviews, the trends of the school and decide those

things they may wish to continue and those they may wish to change. For example, an interview question could ask: "What is the most important thing our school should do for its students?" A questionnaire could ask teachers and parents to rank areas such as raising test scores, increasing student self-concept, and helping students make informed decisions.

Next, the committee might examine what the school does currently, following each observation with the question: "Why do we believe this and what are our commitments and values?" The resulting statements of beliefs and commitments should then be fine-tuned to identify those areas of greatest consensus. An initial draft of this philosophy and mission statement is then shared with the representative groups in the school. The suggestions are debated and amended until consensus or near-consensus is reached by the steering committee. The process may take five or six drafts. It is important for the steering committee to check back with the rest of the community at strategic times so that it does not take on a life of its own.

A related method is for the steering committee to brainstorm all the beliefs that they think should be in a philosophy of the school. Once the group has brainstormed their beliefs, they then select about five of the highest priorities and share these with the general school community, relating the rationale for their selection. The group continues a dialogue until a final consensus is reached. From the beliefs, a series of commitments could be brainstormed in a similar way until a mission statement is developed.

Another mission writing exercise is to ask each person on the steering group to list three or four separate words that best convey the school's finest qualities and then take the most often repeated or similar words from the list. These words frequently capture a school's vision of itself and open the way for sentences introducing the mission statement.

There will be many divergent views expressed in each of these exercises, but each should be addressed as worthy of consideration. The statement should be presented to and discussed with all other persons in the school community for feedback. Once the final or near-final draft is reached, it can be submitted for approval to the organization at large or its governing board. Contradictions or difficulties need not be cause for distress. On the contrary, the steering committee should look at differences of opinion as opportunities for clarification and reconciliation. Final consensus does not necessarily mean that everyone in the school community embraces every word of the statement. Rather, it is important that, at the least, there is no serious disagreement on fundamental values and commitments.

People who have gone through the process of creating mission and philosophy statements suggest that, while a committee should discuss the beliefs and commitments of the school, one person from the committee should write the preliminary statement after the members have discussed relevant issues thoroughly. A draft should be circulated to each member of the committee as many times as necessary for suggestions and revisions and returned to the author to incorporate

the suggestions. Having one member prepare the draft provides consistency and a common direction and style to the text. No mission or philosophy can remain unchanged for long if the school is to continue to be a *growing, thriving* institution. There should be provision made for revising the philosophy and mission statement on a timely basis.

FUNCTIONS OF A PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION STATEMENT

Many schools, especially high schools, are evaluated by outside accrediting agencies, such as the Middle States Association of Secondary Schools. Each accrediting agency has its own instrument for evaluating schools, but, importantly, each starts with a mission, philosophy, and goals statement. Everything else that happens in a school, from curriculum to instructional strategies, to athletics to extra-curricular offerings, to parent partnerships, *is judged on the basis of this statement.*

Even if a school does not go through an accreditation process, all aspects of a school should be aligned to fit the mission statement. A good mission statement is

one that captures the imagination of the school community and enters into the thoughts and actions of what happens at the school over time. It should be used as a starting point for the school to review programs and practices, to set priorities, and most importantly, to judge its own effectiveness.

Without a clear statement of mission and philosophy, a school can be subject to disharmony, dissonance, and lack of clear directions and expectations. Parents, teachers, and students are likely to disagree on school policies simply because no one really knows what the school is ultimately trying to accomplish.

With a clearly stated philosophy and mission to which it adheres, a school can go about its daily tasks of teaching, developing curriculum, working with parents, and relating to the community, confident that all activities are in support of a common, agreed-upon purpose.

Richard Lodish is Associate Headmaster and Lower School Principal of The Sidwell Friends School, Washington, D.C.

APPENDIX
Community Resources:
Baltimore and Maryland

COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE

Baltimore and Maryland

Robert L. Clark

Note: The information in this section was supplied by the organizations or school districts cited, excerpted from publications produced by the organizations cited, or quoted from the book entitled *Take This School and Love It*, produced by the Citizens Planning and Housing Association. The author and the editor regret inadvertent omissions.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The **Community Resource Guide (Baltimore and Maryland Edition)** is organized into two sections: *Resources for Ingredients* and *Resources for Recipes*. The Guide has been organized to help you locate extra help in working with groups and preparing school-community recipes.

The first section, *Resources for Ingredients*, is a listing of groups and organizations that either serve or work with students, teachers, parents, and others described in the Ingredients section of the *Cookbook*. The organizations cited can help you work more effectively with a variety of people on the school-community scene. The second section, *Resources for Recipes*, describes support organizations that can assist you with specific recipes such as community service, mentoring, and fundraising.

Each section is further divided by geographic area. Many listings are provided for Baltimore City, Baltimore County, the Baltimore metropolitan area, and the State of Maryland. For additional information on regional and national organizations, contact your local library.

Finally, each and every organization listed in this Guide is ready, willing, and able to serve you in your efforts toward school improvement. Do not hesitate to contact any group or individual that you think might be of assistance.

ORGANIZED INGREDIENTS

If you are shopping for additional ingredients for your school project, why not start where they are already organized? In this section, you will find suggested offices or organizations that can be great resources for your efforts. Where there are organized ingredients, there are experienced cooks who can provide technical assistance and identify individuals or others who can help you by providing strength in numbers and experience. For insight into the individuals that make up these organizations, read the Ingredients section.

Unless noted, the telephone numbers listed in this guide are in Area Code 410.

STUDENTS

School-Based Organizations

Most senior high schools and many middle schools have student government organizations, clubs, and councils. Use these groups to learn about student issues or to get students involved in projects. Contact individual schools for more information.

District-wide or State-wide Organizations

To learn about broader issues that are being addressed by students (i.e, dress codes, drug prevention, etc.) contact these district or state organizations:

In Baltimore City:

* Office of Community Relations/Mobilization	396-8571
Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City (ASCBC)	
200 East North Ave., Baltimore, MD 21202	

In Baltimore County:

* Baltimore County Student Councils (BCSC)	887-7083
P.O. Box 66, Perry Hall, MD 21128	

In Maryland:

* Maryland Association of Student Councils	333-2249
Maryland State Department of Education	
200 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201	

TEACHERS

School-Based Organizations

Many teachers are involved in organizations at their school, such as the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), the school improvement team, and special committees. Most are either volunteer or professional groups. Contact the individual school for more information.

District-wide or State-wide Organizations

See "Teacher and School Employee Unions" below.

PARENTS

School-Based Organizations

Many schools have active parent organizations (usually the PTA or PTO or a Parent Club). When one exists, it can serve as a measure of the extent to which parents (and community members) are involved with the school. Parent groups are excellent resources for both volunteer and small financial support for school-community efforts. Contact the individual school for more information.

District-wide or State-wide Organizations

Many school districts have citywide parent organizations that meet regularly to provide information and training to parents, discuss common concerns and plan actions. These groups can be helpful in efforts to establish new parent groups at your school.

In Baltimore City:

* Baltimore City Council of PTA's, Inc.
P.O. Box 66068, Baltimore, MD 21239

383-7827

The Baltimore City Council of PTAs is the umbrella organization for local affiliates of the national PTA units in Baltimore City.

* District Advisory Council of Baltimore City
701 East 21st St., Baltimore, MD 21218

889-7382

The District Advisory Council (DAC) is made up of parents, principals, and teachers from the city schools. The DAC informs parents about issues affecting the schools, provides a forum for parents to speak out on issues, and helps the school system resolve issues.

In Baltimore County:

* PTA Council of Baltimore County 661-8516
1732 Dunwoody Rd., Baltimore, MD 21234

A council of parents and teachers who work for the improvement of education in Baltimore County.

* Baltimore County Educational Advisory Council
The geographically-based councils are composed of parents that discuss issues affecting the education of their children.

Central Area Educational Advisory Council	252-2956
Northeast Area Educational Advisory Council	687-5945
Northwest Area Educational Advisory Council	484-7612
Southeast Area Educational Advisory Council	284-4501
Southwest Area Educational Advisory Council	788-9461

In Maryland:

* Maryland Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. 685-0865
13 South Carrollton Ave., Baltimore, MD 21223
The Maryland Congress of Parents and Teachers is an affiliation of the National PTA's, the largest advocacy group for children and youth.

* Parents Anonymous of Maryland 728-7021
1123 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore, MD 21201 HOTLINE: 243-7337
Parents Anonymous is an organization for the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. The organization sponsors free workshops for parents, a 24-hour information, referral and crisis counseling hotline, and other special programs.

ADMINISTRATORS

School-Based Administrators

Principals and assistant principals should be your first contact when establishing relationships with a school. Administrators are the "principal teachers" and resource people in the school, and are involved in virtually all aspects of program design, implementation, management, and evaluation. Contact the school principal directly.

Central Office Administrators

Central office administrators have access to a variety of resources and may possess specialized information related to their function (e.g., procurement, curriculum, health, etc). You should not hesitate to inquire as to the types of assistance they can

provide to support school/community efforts.

In Baltimore City:

*** Baltimore City Public Schools:**

200 East North Ave., Baltimore, MD 21202

The following offices are good places to start when looking for information from the central administration.

- | | |
|--|----------|
| - Office of the Superintendent | 396-8803 |
| - Office of Community Relations/Mobilization | 396-8571 |
| - Office of Communications | 396-8805 |
| - Grants Office | 396-8614 |
| - General School System Information | 396-8700 |

- * Public Schools Administrators and Supervisors Association (PSASA)**
(see "Teacher and School Employee Unions")

In Baltimore County:

*** Baltimore County Public Schools**

Greenwood, 6901 N. Charles St., Towson, MD 21204

- | | |
|---|----------|
| - Office of the Superintendent | 887-4281 |
| - Division of Staff and Community Relations | 887-4127 |
| - Office of Public Information | 887-5555 |
| - Division of Instruction | 887-4021 |

In Maryland:

- * Maryland State Department of Education**
200 West Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201

- | | |
|---|----------|
| - Office of the Superintendent | 333-2200 |
| - Public Information, Partnerships, Marketing | 333-2205 |
| - Maryland School Performance Program | 333-2385 |
| - Office of Communications and Special Projects | 333-2204 |
| - Bureau of Educational Development
(includes Instruction) | 333-2489 |

THE CLERGY

Community-Based

Your neighborhood religious leaders can be extremely helpful in making your school-

community efforts a reality. The clergy are often strong community leaders, have a firm understanding of neighborhood issues, and can help mobilize others in support of your effort. Many members of the clergy are community residents -- your neighbors.

District-wide Clergy Organizations

Coalitions of religious institutions are useful for addressing district-wide issues, such as race and ethnic relations, community revitalization efforts, and conflict resolution projects.

In the Baltimore Metropolitan Area:

* The Archdiocese of Baltimore 547-5378
Office of Public Relations
320 Cathedral St., Baltimore, MD 21201

The Office of Public Relations for the Archdiocese serves as a liaison to bring services and resources of the church to the wider community.

* The Baltimore Jewish Council 235-9006
2701 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218

The Baltimore Jewish Council (BJC) is the Jewish community relations agent of Greater Baltimore. The BJC was founded in 1939 to combat anti-semitism. Today it addresses a wide variety of social, political, and humanitarian issues that affect Jews and the quality of life in our community. The council provides a forum for members, organizations and individuals to respond to their concerns through community education and advocacy.

* Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance 728-0797
c/o Trinity Baptist Church
1601 Druid Hill Ave., Baltimore, MD 21217

This organization is a network of churches of diverse denominations that have joined together to maximize their social and economic impact through unified action.

BUSINESSES/CORPORATIONS

Local Businesses

Local businesses, particularly small firms located in the vicinity of a school such as grocery and convenience stores, eating establishments, and print shops, can bring all kinds of assistance to bear on school/community projects. They are often willing to supply financial, material and human resources. Contact these groups directly.

Corporations

Securing a partnership with a large business can result in long-term benefits to your community/school. Partnerships should be established with care so that the right match for your school can be made. It is wise to work through the following organizations:

In Baltimore City:

* Baltimore City Public Schools:
- Partnership Office 396-8571

* Society of Executive Retired
Volunteers (SERV) 547-8000 (ext 690)
22 Light St., P.O Box 1576, Baltimore, MD 21203
SERV matches the volunteer services of experienced retired executives with nonprofit organizations. They are involved in several educational initiatives in Baltimore.

In Baltimore County:

* Baltimore County Public Schools
Division of Staff and Community Relations 887-4127
Office of the Community Liaison 887-4171

* Baltimore County Chamber of Commerce 825-6200
102 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Suite 402, Towson, MD 21204
The Chamber's mission is to promote business prosperity and an enriched quality of life through strong member involvement in legislative, educational, social and other issues influencing the economic strength of Baltimore County.

In the Baltimore Metropolitan Area:

* Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) 727-2820
111 South Calvert St., Suite 1500, Baltimore, MD 21202
The Greater Baltimore Committee, made up of nearly 1,000 business members, is an economic development group aimed at fostering business growth and strengthening city schools.

* Maryland Minority Contractors 396-5436
540 N. Milton Ave., Baltimore, MD 21205

In Maryland:

* Maryland Chamber of Commerce
275 West St., Annapolis, MD 21401

269-0642

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Your local colleges and universities can provide research assistance, technical support, and the use of sophisticated facilities and equipment. Like business partnerships, university relationships are specialized and usually geared to the needs of the school. Contact the institution for additional information.

In Baltimore City:

* Office of Higher Education
Baltimore City Public Schools 396-8540

* New Community College of Baltimore 333-5555
2901 Liberty Heights Ave., Baltimore, MD 21215

In Baltimore County:

* Catonsville Community College 455-6050
800 South Rolling Rd., Catonsville, MD 21228

* Dundalk Community College 282-6700
7200 Sollers Point Rd., Baltimore, MD 21222

* Essex Community College 682-6000
7201 Rossville Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21237

In the Baltimore Metropolitan Area:

* The University of Maryland
Center for Excellence in Urban Education 383-5505
Coppin State College
2500 West North Ave., Baltimore, MD 21217

This office was established to be the central contact point for schools and school systems seeking assistance from any member campus in the University of Maryland system (in the metropolitan area this includes Coppin State College, Towson State University, University of Baltimore, University of Maryland at Baltimore, the University of Maryland Baltimore County, and University of Maryland College Park). The University of Maryland System is involved in hundreds of innovative and diverse

research, demonstration, and classroom projects in Maryland's schools. The Center can put you in touch with the right campus and department to fulfill your school-community need.

* Johns Hopkins University
Center for Social Organization of Schools
3505 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218 516-0370

The Center has done considerable research on parent involvement in schools and parent/teacher relations. Materials include: reports on parent and student reactions to parent involvement; reports on teacher practices; teacher manuals for involving parents in schoolwork; and survey materials for evaluating school and family connections. The Center can also assist in helping you make connections with other university departments and campuses, such as the Peabody Institute and the Center for Policy Studies.

* Morgan State University
Cold Spring Lane and Hillen Rd., Baltimore, MD 21239 444-3134

Morgan State University has a long tradition of service to schools. The College of Education and other departments are currently involved in staff development, mathematics training, the education of African-American males, partnerships, and other vital school services.

* Loyola College in Maryland
Charles St. and Cold Spring La., Baltimore, MD 21218 323-1010

* College of Notre Dame
4701 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21212 435-0100

* Sojourner-Douglass College
500 N. Caroline St., Baltimore, MD 21205 276-0306

* Goucher College
Dulaney Valley Rd., Towson, MD 21204 337-6000

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Your elected officials can be very helpful in your school/community efforts. They can provide their knowledge of the community, help you involve others, and advocate on your behalf by helping to cut "red tape."

In Baltimore City:

- * Mayor's Office 396-3100
City Hall, 100 N. Holliday St., Baltimore, MD 21202
- * City Council
City Hall, 100 N. Holliday St., Baltimore, MD 21202
 - Office of the President 396-4804
 - Councilmanic District 1 396-4806
 - Councilmanic District 2 396-4809
 - Councilmanic District 3 396-4814
 - Councilmanic District 4 396-4817
 - Councilmanic District 5 396-4820
 - Councilmanic District 6 396-4823

In Baltimore County:

- * County Executive's Office 887-2460
400 Washington Ave., Towson, MD 21204
- * County Council
Courthouse, Towson, MD 21204
 - Main Office 887-3196
 - 1st District, 887-0896
54 Frederick Rd., 21228
 - 2nd District, Courthouse 887-3385
 - 3rd District, Courthouse 887-3387
 - 4th District, Courthouse 887-3389
 - 5th District, Courthouse 887-3384
 - 6th District, 887-5223
7856 Belair Rd., 21206
 - 7th District, 887-7174
7701 Wise Ave., 21222

In Maryland:

- * Governor's Office 947-3431
State House, Annapolis, MD 21401
- * The Maryland General Assembly
State House, Annapolis, MD 21401
 - Information 841-3000

- Baltimore City Information
- Baltimore County Information

841-3255
841-3332

FOUNDATIONS

Foundations can provide financial resources through grants, as well as research support and referrals to organizations that can support you.

In the Baltimore Metropolitan Area:

- * Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers (ABAG) 727-1205
2 E. Read St., 9th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202

ABAG is an association that represents area foundations and grant makers. Contact ABAG for listings of foundations that may be interested in your project.

- * The Enoch Pratt Free Library 396-5320
400 Cathedral St., Baltimore, MD 21201
The Enoch Pratt Free Library, Social Science and History Department provides an extensive collection of publications and references on foundations and grantmakers.

MEDIA - NEWSPAPERS, TV

Getting publicity for your cause or event can greatly enhance your efforts. To secure coverage for your school-community event, contact the local news department.

Using community newspapers is a very effective way to promote your events. Check the telephone directory for addresses and telephone numbers of your community papers.

In the Baltimore Metropolitan Area:

Newspapers:

- * The Baltimore Sun 332-6000
P.O. Box 1377
501 N. Calvert St., Baltimore, MD 21278
- * The AFRO-American 728-8200
P.O. Box 1857, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore, MD 21201
- * The Baltimore Business Journal 576-1161
117 Water St., 9th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202

* Baltimore Jewish Times 2104 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218	752-3504
* Baltimore Times 770 W. North Ave., Baltimore, MD 21217	539-5688
* Catholic Review 320 Cathedral St., Baltimore, MD 21201	547-5555
* City Paper 800 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201	539-5200
* Daily Record 11 East Saratoga St., Baltimore, MD 21202	752-3849
* Towson Times 305 Washington Ave., Towson, MD 21204	337-2640
* Baltimore's Child 11 Dutton Ct., Baltimore, MD 21228	367-5883
* Maryland Family Magazine 4800 Roland Ave., Suite 300, Baltimore, MD 21210	366-7512

Television Stations:

* WBAL - Channel 11 3800 Hooper Ave., Baltimore, MD 21211	467-3000
* WJZ - Channel 13 Television Hill, Baltimore, MD 21211	466-0013
* WMAR - Channel 2 6400 York Rd., Baltimore, MD 21212	377-2222
* WMPB - Channel 67 Maryland Center for Public Broadcast 11767 Bonita Ave., Owings Mills, MD 21117	356-5600
* WBFF - Channel 45 2200 West 41st St., Baltimore, MD 21211	462-4500

Cable Television Companies:

- | | |
|---|----------|
| * Comcast Cablevision (Baltimore County)
1830 York Rd., Timonium, MD 21093 | 391-2600 |
| * United Artists Cable of Baltimore
2525 Kirk Ave., Baltimore, MD 21218 | 366-2288 |

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Neighborhood Organizations

Neighborhood and community organizations can be excellent resources for schools (especially in the area of recruitment and promotion) and are often very interested in working with parents and school staff. Talking to neighbors or reading your local newspaper is a good way to identify groups that are active in your neighborhood.

In Baltimore City:

* The Baltimore City Department of Planning publishes *Baltimore City's Community Association Directory* every year, listing all the community associations in the city. To find out how you can get a copy, call 396-8484. There is a charge for the directory.

* Project Area Committees .522-7474
1004 N. Caroline St. Baltimore, MD 21213

Project Area Committees (PACs) are composed of a range of individuals and/or organizations from designated urban renewal areas. PACs work in conjunction with Baltimore City public agencies to re-develop these areas and to facilitate community involvement in the planning process. If your school is located in such an area, the PACs can be a valuable resource.

In Baltimore County:

* Community directories of Baltimore County may be obtained at the local branch of the Baltimore County Public Library. Call 887-6166 (Towson) or your closest branch.

Umbrella Organizations

Umbrella organizations are coalitions of neighborhood groups that address issues that are common to their area. Many of these are listed in the Baltimore City's Community Association Directory mentioned immediately above.

In Baltimore City:

- * Federation of Communities United for Strength 542-6610
3319 W. Belvedere Ave., Baltimore, MD 21215
The Federation of Communities United for Strength (FOCUS) is a coalition of umbrella groups that meets to discuss common issues among the umbrellas and plans joint actions.

District-wide Community and Civic Organizations

There are many city and county-wide community organizations that are involved in educational issues and can serve you in a variety of capacities.

In Baltimore City and the Metropolitan Area:

- * Baltimore Urban League 523-8150
1150 Mondawmin Concourse, Baltimore, MD 21215
The Baltimore Urban League provides direct services in areas of employment, job training, education, health, housing, and human services and does advocacy on public policy issues. The Urban League has chapters around the country.
- * Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development 225-3882
3100 Walbrook Ave., Baltimore, MD 21217
Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) is an organization of churches and unions. BUILD organizes communities to mobilize their collective power to transform and enrich the quality of life. BUILD has organized around many school related issues in the city.
- * Citizens Planning and Housing Association 539-1369
218 W. Saratoga St. 4th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21201
The Citizens Planning and Housing Association (CPHA) is an organization that does organizing and advocacy to improve the quality of life for Baltimore City residents. CPHA provides technical assistance to both community groups and schools and has worked to improve parent and community involvement in schools.
- * The Fund for Educational Excellence 685-8300
605 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore, MD 21201
The Fund for Educational Excellence is a public education fund that utilizes a grants program and other activities to stimulate creativity in teachers, inspire teachers to learn, work with community groups and institutions to build a broad-based partnership, and share educational successes with the entire community.

*** League of Women Voters** 825-5353
7800 York Rd., Towson, MD 21204

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that encourages informed citizen participation in government. They provide voter information on candidates and issues for elections, and monitor various governmental agencies including the School Board. They also work to ensure parent involvement at all levels of the educational system. The League has chapters around the country.

*** The Junior League of Baltimore** 467-0260
4803 Roland Ave., Baltimore, MD 21210

The Junior League of Baltimore is an organization of women committed to promoting volunteerism and improving the community. They are involved in several education initiatives in Baltimore City.

*** National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Baltimore Branch** 366-3300
8 West 26th St., Baltimore, MD 21218

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) works on many issues in Education. Those issues have included organizing and advocating for increased state funding for education, increased parent involvement in schools and internal changes in the school system. The NAACP has chapters around the country.

*** National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Baltimore County Chapter** 747-7200
Main and Wesley Aves., Catonsville, MD 21228

SCHOOL BOARDS

As community representatives who set school system policies, School Board members can be very valuable allies in your school/community efforts. Their support can often help you work through obstacles to reaching your goals by adjusting policy.

In Baltimore City:

*** Board of School Commissioners** 396-9709
Baltimore City Public Schools
200 E. North Ave., Baltimore, MD 21202

In Baltimore County:

*** Board of Education of Baltimore County** 887-5555
Baltimore County Public Schools
Greenwood
6901 N. Charles St., Towson, MD 21204

In Maryland:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| * Maryland State Board of Education
Maryland Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201 | 333-2000 |
|--|----------|

TEACHER AND SCHOOL EMPLOYEE UNIONS

Teacher and school employee unions can provide both research and human resources. They can also be powerful allies in advocacy efforts.

In Baltimore City:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| * Baltimore Teachers Union
5800 Metro Dr., 2nd Floor, Baltimore, MD 21215
The Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU) represents teachers and paraprofessionals in the Baltimore City Public School System, negotiates contracts and salaries, and provides services to school employees, students and parents. The BTU is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers. | 358-6600 |
| * Baltimore City Teachers Association
104 East Chase St., Baltimore, MD 21202
The Baltimore City Teachers Association (BCTA), an affiliate of the Maryland State Teachers Association and the National Education Association, advocates for teachers at the School Board, City Council, and in Annapolis. | 539-2282 |
| * City Union of Baltimore (Classified Employees)
2527 St. Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21218 | 235-7778 |
| * Public School Administrators and Supervisors
Association of Baltimore City (PSASA)
10 W. 25th St., Baltimore, MD 21218
PSASA represents most administrators in the Baltimore City Public Schools, including principals, assistant principals, and central office administrators. | 243-4310 |

In Baltimore County:

- | | |
|---|----------|
| * Teacher's Association of Baltimore County (TABCO)
305 E. Joppa Rd., Towson, MD 21204
A representative association of teachers of the Baltimore County Public Schools. | 828-6403 |
| * Congress of Administrative and Supervisory Educators (CASE) | 887-4046 |
| * Association of Elementary School Administrators | 887-5946 |
| * Secondary School Administrators Association | 887-7524 |

In Maryland:

* Maryland State Teachers Association 727-7676
344 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201

VOLUNTEERS

Many school/community projects involve volunteers. Parents, community members, and other volunteers can bring valuable and unique resources to your projects.

In Baltimore City:

* Citizens in Voluntarism in City Schools (CIVICS) 396-8622
Baltimore City Public Schools

* Society of Executive Retired Volunteers (SERV) 547-8000 ext. 690
22 Light Street, PO Box 1576, Baltimore, MD 21202

In Baltimore County:

* Office of School Volunteers 887-4117

In Maryland:

* Governor's Office on Volunteerism 225-4496
301 W. Preston St., Baltimore, MD 21201

* Volunteer Involvement Program 547-8000
of the United Way of Central Maryland
22 Light Street, Box 1576, Baltimore, MD 21203

RESOURCES FOR RECIPES

The following organizations and offices can be resources for some of the specific activities outlined in the "Recipes" section of this book.

COMMUNITY (STUDENT) SERVICE

In the Baltimore Metropolitan Area:

Magic Me, Inc. 837-0900
808 N. Charles St., Baltimore MD 21201
Magic Me is a student service organization that enables middle schoolers to experience service to others in nursing homes and other establishments.

In Maryland:

Maryland Student Service Alliance 333-2000
Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201
The Maryland Student Service Alliance provides technical assistance to schools that wish to engage students in community service learning.

FUNDRAISING, PARTNERSHIPS, AND GRANTS

In Baltimore City:

* Baltimore City Public Schools
200 E. North Ave., Baltimore, MD 21202

- Office of Project and Grant Management 396-8614
- Business/Community Partnership Office 396-8571

ADULT LITERACY

In Baltimore City:

* Baltimore Reads, Inc.
Information and Referral Hotline 576-READ
330 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201

In Baltimore County:

* Baltimore County Literacy Works
6901 N. Charles St., Towson, MD 21204

887-2001

MENTORING

In Baltimore City:

* Project RAISE
The Baltimore Mentoring Institute
605 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore, MD 21201

685-8316

Project RAISE (Raising Achievement Increases Self-Esteem) is a public-private partnership designed to decrease the drop-out rate and improve the life chances of inner-city youth at high risk of academic failure. RAISE uses paid coordinators, sponsoring organizations, and individual mentors (supplied by the sponsors) to create sustained caring connections which can make a dramatic difference in the lives of the young people. The Baltimore Mentoring Institute, the parent organization of RAISE, can provide helpful information on establishing mentoring programs.

ADVOCACY GROUPS

These organizations inform the public on certain issues and advocate for changes and improvements in specific aspects of schools.

In Baltimore City:

* Advocates for Children and Youth
300 Cathedral St., Baltimore, MD 21201

547-8690

Advocates for Children and Youth does research and advocacy around children's issues to identify problems and evaluate programs and policies. They advocate for effective services for Maryland's children and youth.

* The Parent Advisory Council for
Exceptional Children (PACEC)
Baltimore City Public Schools
Division of Special Education
200 E. North Ave., Baltimore, MD 21202

396-8995

PACEC is a citywide and school-based support/advocacy group of parents. PACEC informs parents of children with disabilities of their rights and responsibilities in the special education process.

* Parent Network for Gifted and Talented Education
and Advanced Academic Education
400 Hollen St., Baltimore, MD 21212

435-3726

The Parent Network for GATE and Advanced Academic is a state-funded organization of the parents and children enrolled in Baltimore's GATE and Advanced Academic programs. They produce a newsletter, hold conferences and workshops, and advocate for improvements in these programs.

In Maryland:

* Learning Disabilities Association
4418 Wynn Rd., Baltimore, MD 21236

The Learning Disabilities Association's (LDA) purpose is to advance the education, development and general welfare of children and youth of normal or potentially normal intelligence who have learning disabilities. The LDA offers advocacy training sessions for parents and assistance over the telephone concerning special education problems.

* Maryland Education Coalition
104 W. 25th Street, Baltimore, MD 21218

467-9560

The Maryland Education Coalition (formerly the Metropolitan Education Coalition) is a broad alliance of individuals and organizations supporting a common mission to educate, organize and encourage action for improvement in the quality of education throughout the state. Through several activities and under the banner "EDUCATION NOW," MEC has been leading a statewide effort to seek adequate and equitable funding of education.

* Maryland Conference of Social Concern
2516 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218

889-8828

The Maryland Conference of Social Concern has been actively supporting adequate and equitable education funding for the entire state. The education committee works in concert with other organizations to improve public education.

Robert L. Clark is director of education programs for the Citizens Planning and Housing Association of Baltimore (CPHA). Valuable assistance in compiling this section was provided by Ms. Dolores Winston, Baltimore City Public Schools, and Mr. Richard Bavaria, Baltimore County Public Schools.

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Carl Hyman

The Editor

Carl S. Hyman is an urban planner specializing in school-community partnerships. In 1987, he created the *Northwest Community Outreach Project*, a grant-funded program designed to develop linkages between schools and neighborhoods in Baltimore, Maryland. The *School-Community Cookbook* is the culmination of, and sequel to, this highly successful demonstration.

Mr. Hyman, who serves as director of the Office of Project and Grant Management for the Baltimore City Public School System, has a master's degree in Urban Studies from the University of Maryland at College Park, and is credentialed by the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP).

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The Children of Harvey and Lyn Meyerhoff Philanthropic Fund of the ASSOCIATED: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore was established in 1979 by Lyn and Harvey Meyerhoff, to be administered by their children. The Fund supports programs that confront prejudice and promote healthy community relations, neighborhood stabilization, and revitalization.

The Sponsor

The Fund for Educational Excellence is a coalition of business and community people, educators, and parents dedicated to marshalling human and dollar resources to increase student achievement in our public schools. Established in 1984, this public education fund works exclusively with the Baltimore City Public Schools.